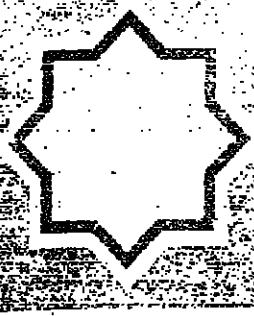


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Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

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اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

Kabariti's statement described as too ambitious, too liberal

Government counts its votes in confidence session

By Raed Al Abed
Star Staff Writer

PRIME MINISTER Abdel Karim Kabariti said his government will protect liberties, respect human rights, open dialogue with various political streams, ensure citizenship rights and consolidate democratic values. Addressing the Lower House Wednesday, Mr. Kabariti said "His Majesty's wish for comprehensive change includes everybody, the people, Parliament, judiciary, media, Government, and the private sector."

Mr. Kabariti asked deputies to grant his government their vote of confidence as he began to present a comprehensive policy statement. Mr. Kabariti pointed out the Government's policies are based on the spirit of His Majesty's letter of designation.

Observers described Mr. Kabariti's policy statement as too liberal, too ambitious and challenging, but expressed doubts that his reforms will pass without resistance.

The Lower House will begin deliberating the statement on Sunday and is expected to vote Sunday night. Mr. Kab-

ariti's government is expected to receive between 52 to 54 votes in its favor.

"We will work to consolidate Jordan's pivotal role on the international and Arab levels," Kabariti told the deputies. "We are also committed to the respect of human rights and the right of self-determination. We will work with honesty and sincerity to establish a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East, and to help our brothers in the Palestinian National Authority with their peace negotiations," he said.

"We will do our utmost to get rid of the consequences of the invasion of Kuwait, which shook Arab solidarity," he added.

"The Government will work to deepen the achievements which resulted from His Majesty's visit to Saudi Arabia, and will continue in the already established cooperation with Egypt, the Palestinian National Authority, and all the Arab countries, including Kuwait. He specifically pointed to the following:

■ Jordan pledges to maintain the unity of Iraq and its regional security. Jordan seeks to alleviate the suffering and



Kabariti

strengthen the rights of Iraqis for freedom, democracy and pluralism.

■ The Government will implement the agreements that resulted from the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty.

■ The Government will continue to improve the country's international relations on all levels. It also reiterates its wish to reach a partnership agreement with the European Union, and to establish a free trade zone in accordance with the resolutions of Barcelona Conference Declaration.

■ People's right to citizen-

ship is an issue which the Government takes very seriously, in the light of its belief in the spirit and content of the Constitution.

■ The Ministry of Interior will establish a permanent office for internal control of its different departments. This will ensure the soundness of its procedures within the law. Also the minister of interior will personally follow up on all measures taken by the Public Security Dept., to guarantee security and achieve an atmosphere of stability in the country.

■ The Government reiterates its commitment to the independence of the judicial authority and respect for the rule of law.

■ The Government will work:

To rehabilitate the official media so it can provide accurate information and analysis on policies and provide proper orientation for the people.

To amend the law of the Radio and Television Corp., and restructure the Jordan News Agency so that its financial and administrative independence can be achieved.

To restructure the Press and Publications Dept., to make it responsible for documentation and to conduct opinion polls, in addition to playing its observatory role.

The Government will not present any legislation which would limit the media and press liberties. No new legislation will be passed without dialogue with concerned experts.

Once the above mentioned is achieved, the Government will work to cancel the Ministry of Information. It will then appoint a minister of state for information affairs, who will be an official spokesman for the Government.

■ The Government believes in the need to develop the field of administration, and concentrate on the supremacy of the law and on the honesty in the designation of posts and in granting promotions. It will do its best to uproot nepotism, corruption, and mismanagement.

■ The Government will review the roles of the private and public sectors. The public sector will work on achieving guidelines for an atmosphere

Continued on page 2

Les Jordanien donnent leur opinion

A LIRE p. 12 dans LE JORDAINE

Jordan sees bad news in bloody death of Iraqi defectors

By Daniel Williams
LA Times-Washington Post News Service

AMMAN—Jordan shivered last Saturday at the news of the swift death of Iraqi defectors who returned to Baghdad after having spent almost seven months here—and saw bad news for itself in the bloody event.

The retribution on Friday, only three days after the defectors' arrival home, was faster and more extensive than even the most

jaded observer of the Iraqi scene expected. Not only were defectors Hussein Hassan Majeed and his brother Saddam Majeed gunned down, but also their father, Kamel, and a younger brother, Hakim.

They were killed by other members of the Majeed clan, two of whom died in the attack on the family home. In the messy shootout, which took place in a middle-class Baghdad neighborhood, three bystanders, including one child, also were shot dead.

Word that the killing was carried out by members of the defectors' own extended family was of no comfort to Jordan. No one believes such an event could be carried out without the support of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

The Iraqi government strengthened the suspicions by praising the two attackers and permitting mourners to carry their flag-draped coffins through the streets of Tikrit, Saddam's and the clan's hometown 100 miles north of Baghdad. State-run Baghdad television said Saddam's sons Uday and Qusay were in the procession.

A government announcement declared the pair "martyrs who died while chopping off the head of failed traitors," according to reports from Baghdad.

Jordanian officials and observers mused that Saddam will try to make Jordan pay for the embarrassment caused by Amman having hosted the defectors, as well as for the Government's collusion with other Arab countries and the United States in a loose anti-

Baghdad front. In recent months, His Majesty King Hussein openly opposed Saddam's regime. His position came to be symbolized by his willingness not merely to house the defectors but also to permit their leader, Hussein Kamel, to speak out against Saddam.

The immediate fear in Jordan is not military retribution but economic. Iraq still supplies Jordan with oil at cut-rate

prices and could cut the supplies off, particularly if it begins to sell oil on the world market.

The United Nations has offered to loosen sanctions on Iraq and let it make limited oil sales for money to buy food and medicine if Baghdad allows UN monitoring of the sales.

Iraq might try to revive efforts to infiltrate Jordanian society and create unrest, Jordanian officials said. "The killings show that Saddam cares about this matter. He is unlikely to forget our role," a high-ranking official said.

In anticipation of further tension, Jordan will turn to Washington for comfort, a Jordanian security official said. On a visit to Washington, the King will press for a clear strategy for political change in Iraq, so as not to leave Jordan out on a limb, the official said.

Washington is considering supplying Jordan with 16 F-16 jets and modern tank equipment this year.

In anticipation of the visit, the Government seems willing to maintain its hard line. Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti harshly criticized the killing of the defectors. "It is a murder," he told reporters. "It is some sort of sentence that has been passed on them without offering a chance for a fair trial."

Jordan has been trying to reverse a pro-Iraqi position that it held during the Gulf War.

Many Jordanians in and out of government regarded the anti-Iraq strategy as risky even before the killings of Hussein Kamel and the others. These officials see Jordan's safest route as one of neutrality.

Jordan also has long been reliant on Iraqi business, and some Jordanians fear that whenever Iraq emerges from isolation, Jordan will be cut off from a resurgent Iraqi economy.

"We have 250 factories that relied on Iraq before the Gulf War. That's a lot of jobs," said a former high-ranking official.

Jordan's future was not the only preoccupation of the day. Jordanians were still wondering why Hussein Kamel returned to Iraq, given his familiarity with the cruelty of the regime there.

Jordanian officials who had met with Hussein Kamel over the months said he had been pining to go home since October. He had quickly discovered that neither Jordan nor the United States was willing to arm and support him in an attempt to overthrow Saddam.

Hussein Kamel himself was regarded by both countries as too much like Saddam to serve as a replacement.

In recent months, according to reports, Hussein Kamel had shown a violent temper and increasingly resented his isolation.

The final decision to return may have resulted from a naive miscalculation of the stakes, one high-ranking Jordanian official said. Hussein Kamel originally defected not out of high-minded ideals of saving

Continued on page 2

New chapter in Jordan-Kuwait relations set to begin, says envoy

By Ahmed Shaker
Special to The Star

A NEW chapter in Jordanian-Kuwait relations is set to begin, the *Charge d' Affaires* at the Kuwaiti Embassy in Amman Mr. Faisal Mkhiezm told *The Star*. This was demonstrated at the reception held on 25 February at the Embassy to mark the Kuwait National Day. He added that relations will quickly witness improvements in the coming days because both Jordan and Kuwait want to close the chapter of the past and embark on a stage of mutual cooperation.

He explained that the contacts between the Emir of Kuwait Sheikh Jaber Ahmed Al Sabah and His Majesty King Hussein, the letters of exchange between the Kuwaiti Crown Prince Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah and HRH Crown Prince Hassan and the meetings between Prime Minister Kabariti and Foreign Minister

Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmed have all facilitated the launching of a new chapter of cooperation.

Official sources said that a statement will be issued soon on the resumption of Kuwaiti-Jordanian relations, symbolized by the reopening of the Jordanian embassy in Kuwait. This issue will be high on the agenda of the forthcoming meeting between Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmed and his Jordanian counterpart Khalid Madadbeh during the Arab Foreign Ministers meeting in Cairo next month.

Officials further pointed out that there is no serious obstacle in the way of re-establishing the bilateral relations between the two countries. They said that direct flights between Jordan and Kuwait will be resumed soon and Royal Jordanian is already prepared for that purpose. Well-informed Kuwaiti sources said that a meeting between the two sides

will shortly be convened to discuss this issue.

Improvements in Jordan-Kuwait relations are seen as a first step for the rehiring of Jordanian doctors, engineers and other skilled workers by Kuwait, sources told *The Star*.

A senior diplomat told *The Star* that a meeting between the Prince Hassan and Sheikh Saad is not excluded, especially since the letters of exchange between the two has clarified all previous misunderstandings.

A substantial change has occurred in the Kuwaiti public attitude towards Jordan recently, said the diplomat. The same can be said of the Kuwaiti press which has just recently started to publish features about Jordan, the most recent



Mr Faisal Mkhiezm

being an interview with King Hussein by Al Qabas and Al Syasah dailies. The sources pointed to the recent statements of the

Speaker of the Kuwaiti Parliament Ahmed Al Sadoun who appreciated the positive changes in Jordan's position. Previously, he was against the restoration of relations. He declined for instance, to participate in the Arab-African Parliamentary Conference that was held in Amman in December.

The *Star* was informed that certain leaders of Jordanian political parties are planning to meet with Kuwaiti parliamentarians very soon. On the other hand, a number of Kuwaitis have visited Jordan recently and showed interest in buying real estate in the country.

Likewise Kuwaiti tourists are expected to flock to Jordan this summer after a long recess following the break of relations in the aftermath of the last Gulf War.

With all this, the scene seems to be set for not only a resumption of relations but for a major overhaul.

Gangsters role in Japan's financial system under scrutiny

By David Holley
LA Times-Washington Post

OSAKA, JAPAN—A white Mercedes-Benz with tinted glass, a trademark vehicle for "yakuza," Japan's mobsters, waited in front of the 11-story luxury apartment, engine running, a glamorous young woman at the wheel and a tough-looking man by her side.

Inside the entryway, the man's voice on the intercom was rich with self-confidence when a visitor asked if his unit were occupied by the Bukyo-kai, a subgroup of Japan's biggest yakuza gang.

"You've done your homework well," he laughed. But when asked about Sueno Kusan, the prominent Osaka real estate company that owns the garish building, the man hung up.

versy-sparked by the current bank loan crisis—over the role of yakuza in Japan's banking system.

Under investigation for tax evasion, Sueno is so widely suspected of mob affiliation that he felt compelled to call a January news conference to deny it: "I am not a yakuza," he declared.

After years of ignoring the problem and wishing it would go away, Japan is finally beginning to examine the sometimes-cooperative, sometimes-violent, always-murky relationship among yakuza, real estate developers and banks.

The belated self-examination was triggered by the dangerous financial mess caused by banks making as much as \$800 billion in bad loans—loans backed by overpriced real estate during the

"bubble economy" fervor of the late 1980s. When land prices collapsed, the collateral's worth dropped to less than half the amount of the loans.

For reasons that lie in the nature of Japan's rapid post-World War II land development, many of those bad loans are to companies with yakuza ties. No one knows for sure what the percentage is, but estimates range as high as 80 percent.

Now, a fierce controversy has erupted over how to deal with the loan mess, which some analysts say totals twice the government's \$400 billion estimate.

Critics argue that if the cleanup is mishandled, the yakuza—who a decade ago lived mainly on extortion, gambling, prostitution and the sale of stimulants—will become entrenched in the



legitimate economy.

Hitoshi Yamada, an attorney who is spearheading efforts by the Japan Bar Association to fight organized crime, says that if the banks cave in and write off their losses, abandoning the properties, clear title on 50 percent to 80 percent of the assets put up

as collateral for bad loans will pass to corporations controlled or influenced by yakuza, who sit on the boards of many such companies.

Thus, Yamada says, unless the banks press court action to recover all the property, a task that under current law is difficult and even dangerous for banks to attempt on their own, the economic power of the yakuza "could become 10 times what it is now."

The Finance Ministry has acknowledged the yakuza's role in the banking system's problems, and in November

proposed a new agency to combat them. It would be able to confiscate and sell to "clean" buyers collateral for non-performing loans. But this is part of a cleanup plan that would require about \$12 billion in public funds, a pro-

Continued on page 2

Iraqis in Jordan pessimistic about prospects back home

The Iraqi regime remains defiant with the government-controlled media claiming that the killings were carried out by family members

By Harry Pullens
Special to The Star

THE KILLING of Iraqi defector Hussein Kamel and his family in Baghdad this week brought swift reactions from around the world. In the words of one Jordanian observer: "Iraq is painfully going back to a pre-historic age where there might never be a complete redemption."

For many Iraqis and sympathizers everywhere, the gruesome killings of Gen. Hussein Kamel and his co-defector brother, their father and other family members have marked a turning point in the Iraqi question.

Many Iraqis in the Kingdom interviewed by *The Star* were not optimistic about a turn around in their economic fortunes. Most were skeptical about successes in the on-going UN oil-for-food formula talks.

Bashir Ramzi, an Iraqi middle-aged man living in Amman, deplored the actions of the regime and charged: "No people can continue this way in this new age under such a repressive regime which con-

tinually intimidates its own people." He maintained there is a great need for positive change, be it in the political hierarchy or in its policies.

"But as long as Saddam remains in power, the economic sanctions imposed on Iraq will never be lifted totally," he said.

The Iraqi regime remains defiant with the government-controlled media claiming that the killings were carried out by family members. Many Iraqis and opposition members believe that is a grand camouflage. "It could never have happened [the killings] without the blessing of the regime," one Iraqi charged.

"The execution must have been ordered by Saddam himself in retribution for their betrayal," said a staunch Iraqi critic who declined to be named.

Since the murders last week, there have been several conflicting reports in the media over the true killers of Gen. Kamel and members of his family. Some reports claimed that the defectors were personally interrogated and shot by

Saddam himself. Jordan, which provided safe haven for the defectors when they arrived here six months ago with their wives, shifted from its past prudence in criticism of Baghdad by joining other countries in the region in decrying the act in the strongest terms.

It is widely believed that the General had decided to return home after he failed to win support from other opposition groups outside Iraq. Other opposition groups not only condemned him as having blood on his hands but believed his defection was no more than a theatrical play.

Shortly after his defection to Jordan last August, Hussein Kamel called on Iraqi opposition groups to meet with him to discuss a 38-page draft charter for the future of Iraq in a post-Saddam era.

The document, which is believed to have been drafted by Hussein Kamel while here in exile, and obtained by some newspapers called for a change in Iraq based on democracy, pluralism and freedom.

JORDAN WEEK

An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Awni Abu Ghosh

King speaks to Kuwaiti-based Al Qabas on Jordan's views on Iraq

■ His Majesty King Hussein predicted Iraq would continue to decline as long as sweeping change was delayed in Baghdad.

In an interview with Kuwait's Al Qabas newspaper, the King denied he had any part in reported US plans to topple Saddam and suggested all he could do for now was to facilitate Iraqi opposition talks on possible changes.

The King's statements to the Kuwaiti press came in the wake of marked improvement in Jordanian-Kuwaiti relations. The King and the Emir of Kuwait exchanged telegrams on the occasion of Kuwait's national day celebrations. The Kuwaiti embassy in Amman held a major event to mark the occasion, which was attended by Prime Minister Abdel Karim Kabariti and senior Government officials, indicating a thaw in bilateral ties.

The improvement in relations came about after a series of letters exchanged by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Kuwait Crown Prince Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah.

"If the situation in Iraq stays as it is, weakness and division will continue. I hope for the best and I hope for the equation to change one way or another," he said.

"There is a continuous dialogue between us and every Iraqi demanding change," he was quoted as saying.

King Hussein said it had been Hussein Kamel's description of the suffering of Iraqi people under Gulf War sanctions that made him reverse Jordan's policy toward its big eastern neighbor.

Asked to comment on a reported statement by US Defense Secretary William Perry that Jordan was expected to help US-backed efforts to topple Saddam, the King replied:

"No. We are not a part of any plan. We have a position on Iraq... which is to save it and this is a matter of fact."

But, he said in answer to a question, that he would "wait and see what is required from us" if unspecified major developments took place inside Iraq, adding Jordan would provide Iraq and Arab states with whatever it could at that time.

"The situation should not continue in this manner," King Hussein was quoted as adding. "Iraq has to be saved. The Iraqi people should enjoy democracy and human rights."

The King reiterated he had no vested interest in Iraq and did not seek a direct role in bringing about change. "I do not say anything unless every Iraqi says it. Whatever that is, we will all accept it. Otherwise I have no interest in Iraq."

On possible change in Iraq, he said: "This matter is up to the Iraqi people themselves. We think they have arrived at a position where they are coming to a change and I believe that it will be sometime not too far from now."

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Haddadin is expected to vote in favor of the Government, as his party member, Mustafa Shneikat, has joined the Government, and appointed as the Minister of Agriculture. The door is still open for surprises. Rumor has it that former deputy prime minister Abdel Raouf Al Rawabdeh is not satisfied with new Government.

Shuqairi remembered

■ Twenty-six February coincided with the 16th anniversary of the death of Ahmed Al Shuqairi, the first Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee. Shuqairi was born in Southern Lebanon, and was brought up in Tulkarm/Palestine. He joined the American University of Beirut, but was deported from Lebanon in 1927 at the hands of the French. As a result, he joined the Law Institute in Palestine, and worked as a lawyer until 1948.

He was the first director of the Arab Information Bureau in Washington, and a representative of Syria at the UN. He was then appointed assistant Secretary General of the Arab League until 1957, when he was appointed as State Minister for UN Affairs. In 1963, he became the representative of Palestine at the Arab League. And in 1984, he was elected chairman of the PLO until his resignation in 1967.

Shuqairi wrote many books including: *From Jerusalem to Washington; Arab Issues; In Defence of Palestine and Algeria; Palestine in the UN.* He died in Amman in 1980.

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domestic investment, will find the proper time to solve this urgent issue. Otherwise, another big problem will be added to those inherited from the past.

Unified increment system needed

■ The Ministry of Administration Development hasn't yet finalized its proposal on a new unified system of allowances. Al Bilad weekly said that such a suggestion was expected a month ago. It added that the delay in presenting such a draft to the cabinet was a result of the different opinions of many governmental departments on the issue. The Ministry is expected to study the current system, and on the basis of the department's suggestions, it is expected to introduce the necessary amendments. The aim of the new system is to find out an integrated and overall system of increments that will be equally applied to all.

JLA not to be taken to court after all

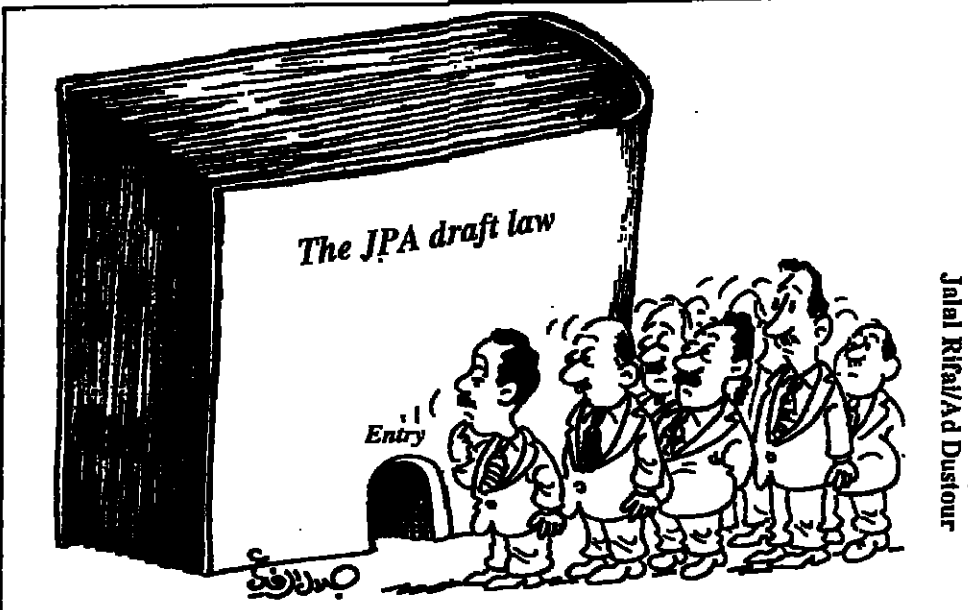
■ The Supreme Court dropped the case taken by former Minister of Justice Hisham Al Tal that contested the election results of the Jordanian Lawyers Association for 1995-97, and the JLA chairman's election. The request came from the new Minister of Justice Mr. Abdul Karim Al Dughmi in his capacity as the representative of the applicant. In his address to the Prosecutor General, Mr. Dughmi said his Ministry sees no further interest in continuing with the contestations that were petitioned last year. It was on that basis that the Supreme Court decided on 27 February to drop the case.

AOHR to release its '95 report

■ The Arab Organization for Human Rights (AOHR) in Jordan will hold a press conference at 11 am on Saturday 2 March to release its 1995 Annual Report on Human Rights in Jordan. The conference will be held at the offices of the AOHR in Al Khourma building in Jabal Al Hussein.

US donation to Waqqas

■ The US donated \$28,000 to the Community Rehabilitation Center (CRC) in Waqqas in northern Jordan. A similar donation of \$58,000 was given to the CRC in 1995 to meet its



Jalal Rifai/Al-Dustour

Shbeilat for Lower House

■ After his resounding victory as the new President of the Engineers Association, Leith Shbeilat has not lost his appetite for politics. He has vowed to fight for one of the parliamentary seats that has become vacant in the Balqa constituency following the death of Ibrahim Shihdi.

The Government, embarrassed by his election while still in prison, is determined to put on a brave face. The new Justice Minister deputy Abdel Karim Al Dughmi said earlier that Shbeilat can be released on bail if the court so desires. He was supposed to be released just before the Eid festivities, but the dragging continued. Mr. Dughmi wouldn't commit himself but went as far as to say that the former Justice Minister Hisham Al Tal was "too strict on the Shbeilat issue."

The re-elected president could become a hot political potato for the Government if he fights and wins a seat in the Lower House.

His re-election is seen by many as a vindication of his anti-normalization views. Deputy Khalil Haddadin says Shbeilat's election is nothing less than a popular referendum on the normalization policies of the Government.

Dr. Theib Abdullah, an Islamic Action Front deputy and head of the Lower House Public Liberties Committee said Shbeilat has come to represent what he called the silent majority.

Meanwhile Mr. Shbeilat continues to receive support from all around the world. The famous Egyptian intellectual Dr. Fahmi Hammad said Shbeilat was "truthful and courageous."

Congratulatory notes for his re-election as President of the Engineers' Association came from Syria, Lebanon, Qatar and Spain.

recurrent costs. A press release issued by UNRWA in Amman this week said that Mr. Robert Hopkins, director of UNRWA operations in Jordan handed over the amount to Dr. M. Bishawi, chairman of the CRC Local committee in a brief ceremony held in Waqqas. The CRC was established in 1990 as a day-care center for the disabled. It now serves 65 persons through the assistance of 20 volunteers from the local community. UNRWA supports eight rehabilitation programs inside and outside camps benefiting 500 people.

Whatever happened to the coffee boycott

■ On a lighter note. The boycott of coffee seems to be still alive and kicking. Despite the fact that we never hear anything about the progress of the boycott, the Consumer Protection Society still maintains that campaign is increasing in the different sections of society. But hold on. Are we missing something here? Does the CPS know something we don't know? We could have sworn that nobody knew anything about the continuation of the boycott for the last month at least. For the sake of credibility, the CPS should own up and admit that it has been beaten!

Jordan sees bad news for itself

■ Iraq but to save his skin over a family feud about money, the official said, and thought he could overcome that problem. Hussein Kamel also tried to reverse his early anti-Saddam statements and show he was still a patriot.

Recently, he criticized a proposal by Defense Secretary William Perry that Arab states join to "accelerate the demise" of Saddam.

In one of his last press interviews, Hussein Kamel said he had "no quarrel" with the Iraqi leader.

The wives of Hussein Kamel and his brother also were pressing to go home. A Jordanian official said. "They too thought this was just a family matter which could be resolved peacefully," he said.

However, shortly after they all arrived in Baghdad, the government announced that the women, both daughters of Saddam, had received divorces from their husbands. Iraqi television said the women "had been misled... by traitors who tricked their wives."

men came to his rented home in a working-class area of Osaka. By the time the speculative bubble collapsed five years ago, a community of interests had emerged between criminals and legitimate businesses - and the boundary between them had grown fuzzy.

Some companies hired gangsters as advisers or put them on their boards, the better to deal with other yakuza confronted in the course of business. Some used gangster expertise in false accounting, money laundering or shady securities deals. Sometimes companies were drawn into such relationships after having trouble repaying loans from yakuza.

Bankers even approached yakuza organizations and encouraged them to borrow money, while securities firms urged them to buy stock, according to Raveuk Miyawaki, former head of the anti-yakuza division of the National Police Agency, who now is an independent business consultant.

The legacy of this unholy alliance helps to thwart resolution of the bad loan mess. As real estate developers, bankers and yakuza worked together, gangsters collected evidence of their partners' misdeeds that can be used for extortion or to back up refusals by yakuza-controlled companies to repay loans, Miyawaki said.

Before the bubble, although they had a lot of money, the yakuza had a consciousness that they lived in a shady society of their own. Then they saw the terrible behavior of the banks, and they lost their sense of shame. They came out into ordinary society."

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Kabariti counts votes

Continued from page 1

which encourages investment, and on a clear vision.

The private sector on the other hand will expand its investments to help to accommodate the increasing man-power in the country, and to increase exports to non-traditional markets.

In accordance with these, the Government will concentrate on nine central points:

■ Safeguarding financial stability.

■ Improving the legal environment.

■ Completion of the package of economic laws, which can make investment fruitful for both investor and citizen.

■ The presentation of a draft law on trade marks, inventions and industrial patents, together with an amended law on authors' rights to the Lower House.

■ Limiting its interference in direct production activities, withdrawing from several economic activities, and decreasing its participation in others in a bid towards privatization.

■ Improving its performance especially in institutions which are linked to the economy.

■ Improving services which support production, and backing the efforts of the private sector to increase value added tax to their products to reach international levels.

■ Developing the banking sector and the financial market.

■ Opening the country up to international economy.

■ The Government is committed to the alleviation of the debt burden.

■ Committing itself to the alleviation of the debt burden.

■ Working to reduce unemployment, and poverty.

All these points aim at a radical solution to unemployment and poverty through expanding and strengthening the economy to create job opportunities.

The Government will intensify its efforts with Arab countries to expand their accommodation of Jordanian labor.

■ The Government will support the vital sector of agriculture, and pay special attention to the needs of the farmers, by passing a document on agricultural policy to achieve a progressive agricultural sector.

■ The Government will open offices to represent Jordan in four important tourism markets in the world. It will encourage private investment in tourism.

■ The Government will establish a capable telecommunications sector to satisfy people's needs. It will work to provide telephone services to all areas that have a population of more than 200. It will also implement the National Telecommunication Project which will provide 400,000 numbers. This will be in service this year.

The Government will also:

■ Provide housing services to the different sectors of the society.

■ Support Royal Jordanian and help it to overcome its difficulties and complete measures to restructure and improve its fleet.

■ To guarantee that the electric services reach the whole population, and complete the regional electrical network with Egypt and Syria, by the end of 1997. This will also cover Iraq and Turkey.

■ To implement the plan for educational improvement, and to complete the second stage of this plan which will run to the year 2000.

■ To raise the level of higher education, and to guide it towards compliance with the changing needs of the market, and aim for the independence of state universities by giving them the necessary support.

■ Cooperate with the Lower House to pass legislation which can guarantee the establishment of the "National Fund for the Support of the Sport and Youth Movement."

■ Plan to present bids to build hospitals to improve the state of health.

■ To develop the level of management in the Ministry of Social Development in order to provide humanitarian services using fast and efficient methods.

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Gangsters role in financial system under scrutiny

Continued from page 1

pect that outrages many citizens. Police estimate the total number of yakuza in Japan at 80,000. The roots of the gangsters' move into big-time business, and their pivotal role in the banking crisis, largely result from their ties to "jingeiya," or land consolidators: people who assemble tiny adjacent plots into pieces big enough for modern developments.

Throughout Japan's recent economic development, yakuza were called in when recalcitrant tenants or homeowners, protected by strong tenants' rights laws and weak powers of eminent domain, stood in the way of commercial projects. Illegal coercion was often the answer. Even government agencies indirectly used them on occasion to clear the way for highways or other projects.

Yakuza tactics include verbal harassment, veiled threats and techniques such as fouling properties with manure, "accidentally" crashing into buildings with dump trucks and arson.

This became especially lucrative during the "bubble" years. Gangsters moved into the field in a big way, establishing ever-tighter relations with jingeiya, real estate companies, construction companies and even banks.

And when extra money was needed to offer a bigger carrot as well as a stick to holdouts, jingeiya sometimes turned to yakuza loan sharks for the funds. This further twisted the gang's "equity" in real estate development.

The targets of coercion are people like retired auto parts factory worker Hideo Matsumoto, 63. Last year, he said,

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Our Say...

A new sense of governance

THE GOVERNMENT of Prime Minister Abdel Karim Kabariti should win the confidence of the Lower House next week, after some deliberations by the deputies. By passing that important constitutional hurdle, the young premier should begin his work in earnest. His policy statement will be described as too positive, too ambitious and too unrealistic. In fact, some already believe Mr Kabariti has committed himself to so many issues that sooner or later he will be asked to deliver on his promises.

This may turn to be a classical case of putting one's money where one's mouth is. The citizens of this country are hopeful that the new Government will actively work to reverse the fortunes of this country, especially in the areas of economy, trade, living conditions, foreign relations among others.

No other Prime Minister has taken the stand to make so many daring statements that touch on corruption, public sector performance, foreign relations, communications, information and education policies. In the short run, Mr Kabariti has succeeded in raising our spirits—people needed to hear such statements, although other governments had also made promises to encourage investments and streamline government. Somehow, we tend to believe that Mr Kabariti has the means, the backing and the will to deliver.

This is now the case. With deputies rallying to support his Government, a favorable media on his side and a strong and unequivocal backing from the palace, Mr Kabariti is uniquely positioned to take this country forward.

We have said it before and we say it again. Mr Kabariti's foreign policy successes will not do him much good if he fails on the domestic front.

To succeed, Mr Kabariti should first of all believe in his own policy statement, and second underscore the urgency of unleashing the process of change in all aspects of our lives. Let's not deceive ourselves any longer. Economically, we are not doing as we are supposed to and the burden is increasing on the shoulders of the average citizen of this country. For the Government of Mr Kabariti to launch its reform program, it must reinstate our belief in the democratic process and in the separation between the three branches of government. In addition, Mr Kabariti will have to make good on his promise when he reactivates the role of the private sector once and for all in the building process.

But what Mr Kabariti and his team of ministers should begin with is to dismantle the barriers that kept government away from the people for so long. This requires a change in our perception of government, from an edifice of authority to be feared and desired, into a source of inspiration to be respected.

Mr Kabariti will not be the last prime minister in Jordan's history. Others will take their turn at the helm, but what Mr Kabariti can do right away is to lay the foundation of a new sense of governance in Jordan. That's a challenge worthy of him.

Letters to the Editor

Appreciated efforts

Dear Sir,

I would first of all thank you, for your excellent and much appreciated efforts in putting this wonderful product together.

I am very pleased to find such a news source, of such a standard and quality, be available on the Internet.

The Star is simply the best source of reliable and honest news about Jordan and the region. I am proud to see such a product. *The Star* is a result of the hard work put together by the finest and the elite of our Jordanian journalists.

I think *The Star* is a success story, and allow me to wish you the best.

Sincerely yours,

Amer Mowafi
amowafi@mcimail.com



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The Hussein Kamel saga Execution by tribal rule

'...never in a country of the late 20th century has a clan made the decision to end the life of one of its citizens for political reasons on behalf of the government.'

By Awni Abu Ghosh

THE SEEMINGLY puzzling return of Iraqi defector Hussein Kamel to Baghdad underlined the ambiguity that had previously surrounded his defection in August last year. The principal question that remained unanswered was why Kamel, a pillar of the Iraqi regime, abandoned his besieged country. Kamel's statements that the growing resentment and public unrest against Saddam required support from the exiled Iraqi opposition, Arab countries and the world at large didn't hold water.

It was soon discovered that neither the Iraqi opposition abroad, nor Arab public opinion could trust the defector. In addition, US and European intelligence officials, who rushed to meet the former Iraqi army general in charge of Iraq's armament program, seemed to have found in him something different from what they had expected. So the man was left in almost total isolation.

The tragic end of Hussein Kamel in Baghdad some 10 days ago pointed to many signals of despair and political immaturity. The abandonment of the army general by the exiled opposition, whose support he wanted to mobilize, was no less destructive than the total negligence by the Arab states.

Even businesses in the region, whom he made contact with, were not attracted by his millions of dollars for partnership. Kamel's wish for support from the US and other Gulf war allies was so naive that it failed to realize that such powers had knowledge of who and what he was in Iraq. In the same vain, Kamel trusted in Saddam's pardon, although the Iraqi regime

had branded him as a traitor just a few months earlier.

Despite this, a different end could have been foreseen. Politically, Kamel was already dead, and could assume none of his former posts. But his return was not treated in political terms. He was left at the mercy of tribal rule, and brutally murdered by his own clan.

Knowing that such a mentality might prevail, Kamel's decision to go back home was not well calculated.

Though most Arab societies are still crippled, to varying degrees by outdated traditions and perceptions, their states have modern constitutions, executive, legislative, and judicial authorities, all of which stipulate the respect, insurance and protection of basic human rights.

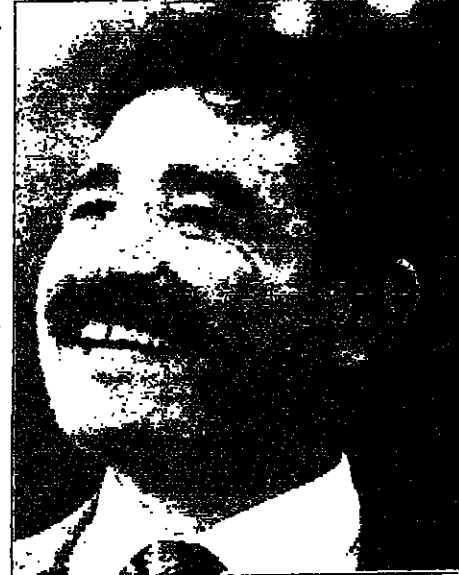
These insure the organization of the society. Since the interests of the tribes are part and parcel of the society itself, they are expected to overpower tribal rules. Furthermore, it is the state's duty and obligation to safeguard its local tribes if they are exposed to external or internal offense. But never in a country of the late 20th century has a clan made the decision to end the life of one of its citizen

for political reasons on behalf of the government.

In fact, in Hussein Kamel's case, it was the government which encouraged the tribe to take up a task that was predetermined well in advance. It is all the more shameful to deprive a citizen of his right for a fair trial in a country in which the first legislation in the world was issued through Hammurabi's Laws four thousand years ago.

These developments also took place at a time when the UN-Iraq negotiations on a partial lifting of sanctions for humanitarian reasons had taken long strides.

The brutal murder of Kamel, the forced divorce, the unknown fate of his children, and the deprivation of his basic rights are all humanitarian issues. At this juncture, world



Kamel

public opinion is encountered with a controversial situation. It is difficult to predict how the UN negotiating team will actually deal with this problem at a later stage.

Though the vital need for medicine and foodstuffs by the Iraqi people are much more important than the survival of an individual Iraqi citizen or clan, the point is that there are certain countries in this world which are so influential that they can stop the process of sanction lifting if they so wish. If this is done, the Iraqi people will be the ones to bear the brunt.

No one can really know for a fact why Kamel defected and subsequently returned, but his murder was obviously an issue of malicious vengeance, and the method through which it was carried out is in total contradiction of the legislations of a modern state.



Arms control

The other side of the peace process

Arms Control and Security in the Middle East, The Search for Common Ground, edited by Richard Elmsendorf, Initiative for Peace and Cooperation in the Middle East, Washington DC, 1995, pp 128.

Reviewed by
Star Staff Writer

THIS BOOK is the outcome of a seminar held in Stockholm in 1994 on security policies. The idea of arms control and confidence building measures came to the fore after the second Gulf War when former US President George Bush outlined a plan for arms control in the Middle East. The need for such measures of arms control and confidence building was even more pressing after the Israeli agreements with the Palestinians and Jordan. This book has contributions by writers from different parts of the region. Although none represents a government officially, they all reflect the general views and beliefs of their states.

Ahmed Fakhr from Egypt focuses on the management of arms control, especially on the dangers posed by devastating weapons and on cutting the financial burdens imposed by the need to maintain sufficient military opportunities to ensure national security. Therefore, he stresses the reallocation of military hardware to defend only vital interests rather than accumulating mass destruction weapons.

Hassan Mashhadi from Iran says that arms control in the Middle East can achieve results, but only if it addresses military build-ups which result from the perceptions of insecurity. However it will be of no use if military build-ups aspire to political supremacy.

Dor Gold from Israel, Zuhair Diab from Syria, and Ahmed Khalidi from Palestine, focus more sharply than Fakhr on the ground issues as they arise in bilateral relations. Gold and Diab focus on specific imbalances of concerns to

the two states. Khalidi says that arms control must be mutual and, from a Palestinian perspective, arms control with the Israelis have to be taking place.

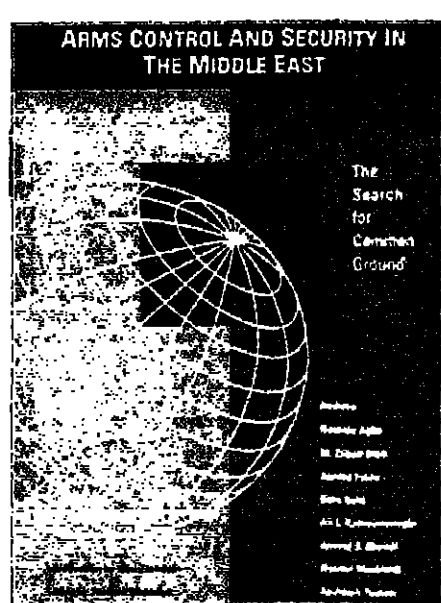
Abdullah Toukan of Yarmouk University in Jordan argues that the objective is mutual deterrence, and the means to realize arms control must be structural and not merely operational as was the Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe. CSCE must be seen as a starting point.

As for the geographic extent of arms control, Gold and Diab again share a common perspective by advocating limiting balances to front-line states, so does Hussein Agha who provides a region-wide perspective of the issues raised.

Gold stresses the importance of a regional regime encompassing multiple front-line balances while Agha says there are too many fronts affecting too many states to allow for the creation of any sort of regional regime.

Khalidi, Toukan, Ali Karasamanglu of Turkey and Fakhr, all stress the importance of creating a wider net. Mashhadi, however, takes an intermediate position, which reflects on the fact that Iran is a power with the widest regional reach. Gold draws upon the US-Soviet experience that arms control can be pursued by powers with disagreement, but, he does not however, mention the CSCE process at the agreements on arms limitation negotiated with the US by Gorbachev. Diab rejects the US-Soviet model.

Agha too is skeptical of the US-Soviet model because of the multipolar nature of the re-



Diab agrees with him because of Israel's superior indigenous industry. Fakhr on the other hand sees America's role as vital to the qualitative superiority of Israel over her neighbors. Khalidi adopts a more general attitude.

Agha sees the matter in more critical terms, because the presence of third parties will complicate matters. Karasamanglu devotes considerable attention to naval arms control. And while Gold stresses the need to control conventional weapons, Diab and Karasamanglu don't view the Israeli nuclear weapons as posing any threat, though Khalidi sees Israel's nuclear superiority at the root of Palestinian concern. Indeed Khalidi, Mashhadi and Toukan demand the creation of a region that is free of mass destruction weapons.

Although Diab and Gold agree on many issues, they differ on one central issue. Diab wants a comprehensive peace to be achieved before negotiations on arms control could be started, while Gold thinks some steps can be taken in the military domain. Some Arab states like Iraq and Syria say that discussions about regional stability serve very little purpose while a state of war exists between them. Iran shares this view. The papers of this book showed that there is common ground on arms control issues throughout the region especially between Syria and Israel. These discussions will become of greatest importance if and when comprehensive peace is achieved between Israel and the Arab world.

The Book was made in cooperation with the Washington-based Initiative for Peace and Cooperation in the Middle East. Through its media program the Initiative is seeking to bring people of diverse opinion together for a common peaceful aim. Its last trip to the region made in December was specifically for that objective.

Death wish

THE MURDER of Gen. Hussein Kamel Hassan Majeed, and his brother was no surprise. The addition of another brother, and his father to the body count did not change much in the nature of the crime, but merely added to its brutality.

The change of fortunes, over a brief period, which accompanied the career of Hussein Kamel is truly a part of a film script. From a humble background, and a semi-literate education, he rose to the highest ranks in the Iraqi army, and supposedly constructed the elaborate schemes of deception which allowed Iraq to acquire mass destruction weapons.

Arriving in Amman, and spending his last days before preserving the image of a man of substance, and that of one of no consequence, he decided to call his kinsmen's bluff. Knowing too well that the pardon was also a bluff, he went to the afterlife, literally "with a bang." Undoubtedly, he was killed by his family, of which president Saddam, is its most prominent member. However, one cannot choose his family but can choose his friends (an ancient wisdom, the late General does not subscribe to).

Since his arrival to Jordan, he was hounded by popular and regional suspicion, regarding the motives for his escape. And even when the motives became apparent with the benefit of hindsight, he lost his life. Popular curiosity is not abated, and there are still questions about his death. He came to Jordan, delaying the inevitable for a few months.

He made his views clear about the nature of the Iraqi regime by calling on the people to topple it. That was a privilege granted to a political refugee who chose the freedom of his own people. Jordan, which had hosted him for the last few months, offered all protection, but as a host country did not interfere in the internal politics of the Iraqi opposition, and the choice was left, just as in any democratic country that hosts an opposition, to the Iraqi exiles themselves. Whether the Iraqi opposition accepted rallying around Hussein Kamel or not, was not a Jordanian affair, and irrespectively, he would have been an honored guest in our country had he chosen to remain.

For a man who was acquainted with the internal machinations of Iraqi politics, he should have assessed the sincerity of the promise of pardon offered to him. This is the common reasoning behind the stories which emerged after his death. Yet, Hussein Kamel did not make headway with the Iraqi opposition for reasons well known. As a man used to being in the center of events, he refused to remain an old shadow of his powerful previous self, and threw himself at the first straw thrown in his direction, that of a pardon from the grandfather of his children.

Normally, one would have thought twice before trusting the Iraqi president, but the oil for food negotiations at the UN, lulled the late General into the false security, that president Saddam could not behave barbarically at this critical stage. But again, and in front of the whole world the regime in Baghdad proved itself to be of the calibre of the *casa nostra*, rather than a country accustomed to civil processes and statesmanship.

It is not the first time that the Ba'ath in Iraq shoots itself in the foot, and alas, it won't be the last time that blood is shed in the streets of Baghdad. Many in the world still wonder about the nature of the Iraqi regime, and many reasonably intelligent people still ask the same questions regarding the cold bloodedness of the crimes that still take place in Iraq. One thinks that the events are there for all to see, and president Saddam is not ashamed of it.

Business scene

Agricultural rot needs better marketing, say experts

■ The foreign investment volume for 1995 increased to JD 12.6 million. In cooperation with local companies, foreign investments went to 56 projects. This is slightly less than the 77 projects for 1994. However, total foreign investment for that year was JD 11.5 million. About 23 industrial projects were initiated in 1995 at a capital of JD 6.2 million. 14 commercial projects at JD 2.5 million and 15 services projects at JD 3.8. Compared to 1994, 48 industrial projects were registered, with foreign investment at JD 7.4 million.

■ The volume of deposits in Jordanian banks is JD 5665 million, that includes JD 2204 million in foreign currency. Commercial loans reached JD 3614 million, of which 489 million dinars were to the industrial sector.

■ The Audit Bureau saved the State Treasury more than JD 6 million in 1995. The savings were made because of the diligence of the bureau which maintained strict control and rigorous procedures over Government departments.

■ The Industrial Development Bank (IDB) has granted loans worth JD 2.5 million to five projects during February. A proportion of JD 1.4 million of the loans went to three industrial projects (a publishing house, plastic pipes, and textiles), while the remaining JD 1.1 million was given to two tourism projects (a hotel in Amman, and a restaurant in Al Hoson).

■ The Mining Investment Co (MIC) invited public underwriting of 1.25 million shares at a JD 1.25 million nominal price. The founders of the newly established MIC, with a paid up capital of JD 5 million, have covered JD 3.75 million share, and paid 25% of the nominal value according to the MIC internal procedures.

■ The Jordan-Syria Land Transporting Co yielded a JD 3.5 million profit last year. The two states will receive JD 1 million each, which is equivalent to 33% of the company's JD 6 million paid-up capital.

■ The Arab-German Insurance Co., has just been formed at a paid-up capital of JD 5 million. The founders of the company have subscribed to half of the amount. The rest would be put up for public subscription.

AMMAN (Star)—The strangulation of agriculture emanates from the lack of planning in this vital sector. Agriculture forms about 7-8% of the GNP, employs 7.4% of the labor force, feeds about 22% of the population, and makes up to 19% of exports. Hence agriculture deserves more attention to promote its production potential, especially in a country of meager natural resources.

True, the 'green valley' farmers' complaints of increasing production cost, water prices, fertilizers, machinery, wages, and diminishing markets were brought into focus, but an effective solution to the agricultural recession is yet to take place. If this situation continues, the repercussions will be disastrous: farmers will give up agriculture and join the unemployed, the 2.5 million arable lands will be turned into fallow, livestock will be at stake, environment will be damaged, and malnutrition aggravated.

Evidence of such an imminent danger was reflected in His Majesty the King's Letter of Designation which calls for the need to review the volume and performance of agriculture and to make it compatible to the area it serves. The letter noted the negative developments of the agricultural sector during the past few years.

The Minister of Agriculture Mustapha Sheikhat said the agriculture problem is the outcome of accumulated issues and concerns of many years, though marketing is now its crucial dimension, and the main reason for the deteriorating status of farmers. He sees that marketing must be given priority which his ministry would seek to resolve.

Proceeding from the Letter of Designation and banking on his own analysis and understanding of the agriculture problem, Dr Sheikhat believes that haphazard solutions will be no good and what is needed at this stage is cooperation with exporters who are eligible to incentives and to the removal of obstacles that are detrimental to exports.

Meanwhile, Dr Sheikhat confirmed that his ministry is earnestly seeking productive and effective alternatives to vegetable harvesting in the Jordan Valley. He stated that a study in this regard already exists, however, the minister maintained, is one of water availability. Sheikhat explained that the study argues for the substitution of vegetables by citrus trees, almonds, and bananas, a project that requires huge

water quantities for irrigation. However, he said that with the completion of water dam projects in the valley, the Ministry of Water and Irrigation will be able to provide the needed water.

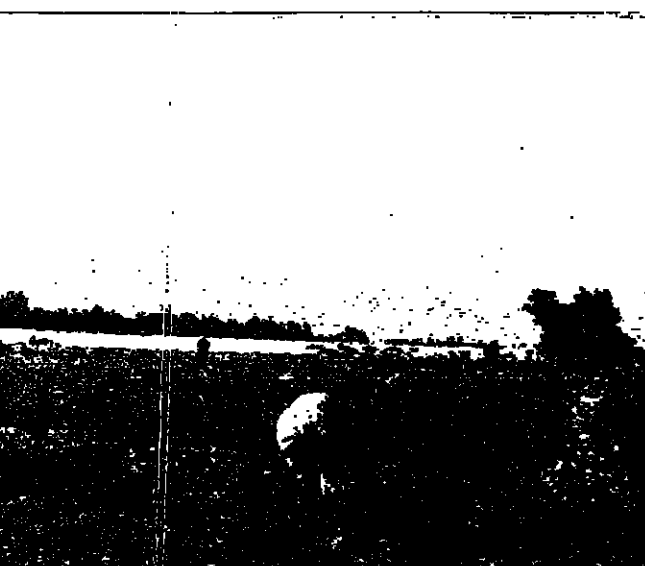
Deputy Ali Shati warns of the alarming situation of agriculture in the Jordan Valley. Viewing it as unprecedented, and that all farmer attempts of treatment were futile, Shati said the agriculture problem is a national issue. He suggests an enactment of a law of agriculture production which would take into consideration the balance in the national economy as a whole. Shati says that the country needs no new bills of payment for imported agricultural goods once the farmers abandon their lands.

Though Shati shares the idea of the Minister of Agriculture that marketing is a persisting issue, he also joins the farmers in their complaints of rising agricultural and water prices, closure of traditional markets, expansion of arable areas, the lack of an integrated agricultural policy, and the foreign labour force.

In his understanding, a radical solution of the agriculture problem lies in finding domestic and external markets, and in reducing production cost. Shati drew attention to the fact that external markets are subject to closure, owing to competition from other exporters, lower prices, better transport means and export facilities.

He appealed to the Government to insure stable and permanent foreign markets for our agricultural products, and keep the farmers informed of the needs and volumes of those markets. In his opinion, this will help reduce the marketing obstacles of Jordan's agricultural production.

Dr Salem Lawzi, general manager of the Agricultural Marketing Corp. (AMC), said



Experts argue that Jordanian agriculture is badly in need of marketing

the over-production of agricultural crops at this winter harvest is unprecedented in the history of Jordan. Indeed, this is thanks to the expansion of arable lands, mild climate, and disease- and insect-free environment. This naturally leads to a price decline, especially in the absence of external markets. Lawzi added that given the similar climatic circumstances in the neighboring Arab countries and those which import our agricultural goods, one can logically comprehend the ongoing export detrimental obstacles. In fact, 98% of Jordan's agricultural exports are destined to Arab countries especially to Lebanon and the Gulf states.

Dr Lawzi views the current agricultural crisis to be over in a month's time, as the seasonal harvest, at home and in the neighboring countries, of some vegetables will be over, too.

He expects the vegetables' prices to rise then, particularly because the green production will be confined to the Jordan Valley from Adasya in the north to Sweimeh in the south. Lawzi added that the farmers in Ghour Al Safi are already instructed not to sell their tomato production at the Central Market in Amman, but rather to Al Aardh Industrial Complex. This would mean the manufacturing of 37,000 tons of tomato from Ghour Al Safi alone. Al Mafraq Agricultural Food Industry has also accepted 15,000 tons of Jordan Valley tomatoes during this season. In one sense, this would relieve the farmers' hardships, and on another absorbs the surplus production of this item.

Nevertheless, planning, not abrupt and temporary solutions is what the farmers and the economy need. Otherwise problem recycling would recur.

delegation is scheduled to meet here and in Chicago were in Amman last year, Shaalan emphasized, that their trip here was part of the "general effort" to project Jordan's economic liberalization program which has strengthened the private sector.

Jordan has enacted several new laws to emphasize the business-friendly environment, particularly after the Jordan-Israel peace treaty signed last October. On the visit are members from the Jordan Trade Association.

Other groups assisting in the visit were the National US-Arab Chamber of Commerce and the Jordan Export Development and Commercial Centers Corporation (JEDCO).

Jordan trade delegation seeks American partners

By George S. Hishmeh
USIA Staff Writer

WASHINGTON—A Jordanian trade delegation began February 26 a week-long visit to the United States in the hope, according to a spokesman, of finding "a marriage between US technical know-how and managerial skills and the low-cost manufacturing base in Jordan."

The spokesman, Fawaz Shaalan, said his Jordan Trade Association group would spend two days in Washington and then fly to Chicago for one-on-

one meetings with representatives of American businesses to discuss potential joint ventures and licensing, purchasing and distribution agreements.

Speaking at a luncheon hosted by Jordan's Ambassador in Washington, Fayez Tarawneh, the leader of the delegation of 11 Jordanian businessmen, emphasized that his country nowadays serves as the "gateway" to the emerging Middle East which he underlined has a market of 120 million persons.

"Trucking distance from Amman to Tel Aviv," he continued, "is only five hours." It

takes the same time to travel from Amman to Damascus or Beirut, he added, and one can reach Cairo in less than 24 hours. In other words, he repeated, "in one day's driving you can reach a market of 120 million people."

Shaalan added: "We know the US possesses great technical know-how and great expertise in the areas of management and marketing. We feel that in Jordan, we have a pretty good manufacturing base. I believe that a marriage of those two comparative advantages can be very beneficial

and would create a success that would allow us to service the new emerging Middle East."

The Jordanian business delegation, which includes two women, represents among others para-pharmaceutical firms, agrochemical producers, and retailers of bedouin handicrafts, and is seeking developers for a new plant for detergents and household products. US distributors of natural Dead Sea products, manufacturers of entertainment machinery, light bulbs, alkaline batteries, dried baby foods, cereals, and organic fertilizer.

This is the first Jordanian business delegation to visit the United States after the Amman economic summit last October, which emphasized the partnership between the public and private sectors in the Middle East. Although none of the American companies that the

Business Chronicle

Complaints Office seeks removal of investment obstacles

PRIME MINISTER Kabariti's timely visit to the Investment Promotion Corp. (IPC) underlined two main facts: the Government's resolve to follow with its economic reforms through dynamic interaction between the executive authority and the sectors concerned, and the Cabinet's readiness to provide the facilities needed for the invigoration of economic growth, including investment.

In harmony with the directives of the Letter of Designation, Mr Kabariti decided to set up at the prime ministry a special office for investors' complaints. This concrete measure is designed to deal with the problems that have often been raised by investors. Far from adding a new bureau, Kabariti assured the IPC that the task of this office would be to seek to remove any investment obstacles that are detrimental to the development of the national economy.

Chairman of the Development Council, and Minister of Higher Education, Dr Abdallah Nsour, explained that the promotion of local, regional, and international investment in the country is closely associated with two major issues: the sorting out of investment projects, and the preparedness of the IPC to meet the wishes and demands of the investors themselves. In this regard, he pointed to the licensing complications effecting investment projects and ventures.

As a channel between the investors and the government departments concerned with investment, the IPC is envisaged to assume three main tasks: a) to grant tax and customs incentives under the new law of investment to all those interested. This necessitates the updating of methods of interaction with the investors, and of granting licenses as well, said Dr Talib Rifai, the IPC general manager; b) to insure facilities for investments. These include identification of points of weakness, strangulation, the specification of investment structures, and the establishment of permanent coordination with the private sector; and c) to promote Jordan as a viable venue for investment. This can be done through the publication and distribution of pamphlets, brochures, and bulletins, which the IPC is currently working on and the organization and/or participation in events that deal with local and foreign investment.

Listening to these remarks and explanations, Prime Minister Kabariti understood well how vital investment project are and how much they can contribute to the rehabilitation of the economy once they are implemented.



Kabariti

Profit hits record £534 million after nine months

BRITISH AIRWAYS today announced pre-tax profits of £104 million for the three months to December 31, up 30,000 percent on a year ago.

On top of record half-year figures, this took the nine months result to another high at £534 million, up 24.5 percent on £429 million (rested in line with Financial Reporting Standard 5) a year ago.

The airline has also again broken records for passenger traffic carried and the percentage of seats sold. Sir Colin Marshall, the Chairman, said the results reflected "an industry environment which remains favourable with demand ahead of a capacity increase."

Looking ahead, he said: "Business prospects remain encouraging with forward bookings returning to higher levels following a fall-off in January. Yields continue under pressure but a record profit for the year anticipated. We expect to continue our programme of performance improvements through a wide range of step-change initiatives."

Turnover for the third quarter increased by 8.7 percent of £1,895 million, taking the figure for the nine months to £5.0 billion on a year go. In the third quarter, 7.5 million passengers were carried, up 3.9 percent.

A total of 24.8 million passengers flew on British Airways' scheduled services in the nine months, an increase of 5.0 percent on a year ago. In the third quarter, 7.5 million passengers were carried, up 3.9 percent.

New Saatchi & Saatchi offices symbolize growing links

FOLLOWING RECENT visits to Beirut, the new management team at Saatchi & Saatchi Advertising Middle East has expressed confidence in the development and future potential of the advertising market in the Levant.

This development has most recently been symbolised by the opening of new offices in Jordan and Syria under the auspices of Saatchi & Saatchi Advertising/BD&A.

"Increasingly, our clients in the region require the support of a strong network with international expertise, and local agency partners and staff with an excellent understanding of the market," stated John McNeill, newly-appointed CEO. "Therefore our relationship with Saatchi & Saatchi/BD&A in the Levant can only

go from strength to strength."

The Lebanese agency has been celebrating its fourth anniversary with new account wins, including Middle East Airlines, the Bank of Beirut & Riyadh, The 8th Pon Arba Games/Cite Sportive, the Investment Development Authority of Lebanon, Aishti & Heinz. Additionally, new accounts in Jordan include Sony and the Rebuilding Exhibition, and in Syria the Joud Trading Group.

Saatchi & Saatchi Advertising/BD&A has been the most successful start-up in the history of advertising in Lebanon," said Ramsay Najjar, Chairman of the S&S/BD&A Levant agencies. "But in the months and years to come, we'll show this was only the beginning." He continued, "our association with Saatchi & Saatchi - the best brand name in the industry - has brought great benefits to this agency and to the market as a whole. We're proud to be associated with Saatchi & Saatchi Advertising Middle East and look forward to continuing a great relationship with the new management team."

The Middle East's new Chairman & Executive Creative Director, Edward Jones added "We are all very proud of the work that Ramsay, Eli Khoury, Raymond Merheb, Paul Sader - the Agency M.D. - and their team have done over the years and with these new offices and account wins, we look forward to their strategic focus and creative brilliance being available to even more clients."

US campaign informs people about the new \$100 bill

WASHINGTON, DC—The US government is conducting a worldwide public education campaign to familiarize people with its newly designed \$100 bill, which includes advanced and proven protective features.

The new bill is scheduled for release in the first quarter of 1996. The global education campaign is using pamphlets, posters, training videos, briefings and targeted advertising to reach the hundreds of millions of people who use US currency. The US Treasury has sent detailed materials to more than 200 US diplomatic missions, whose representatives are already meeting with government officials, financial institutions, businessmen, media and the public to inform them of the upcoming currency. Millions of pamphlets in 20 languages have been printed and distributed through the US Information Agency and their USIS offices overseas.

The USIS has also translated the materials into local languages and dialects. To ensure that users of US currency have quick access to information, the Treasury has established six global information centers to provide information and coordinate regional outreach.

"With two-thirds of all US currency circulating outside the borders of the United States, we have a responsibility to educate those who put their trust in our currency," said Treasury Under Secretary John D. Hawke.

The Federal Reserve System's 12 banks and 25 branches are responsible for educating depository financial institutions in their respective regions about the new series currency.

The Treasury's Bureau of Engraving and Printing has been producing and building an inventory of new \$100 notes since September 1995. Nearly \$600 million notes have been already been printed. After shipment to Federal Reserve Banks across the United States,

the enhanced Series 1996 notes will be introduced into global circulation as the older notes are returned to the Federal Reserve.

Both types of bills will be legal US tender. The United States will not devalue either its older or new currency in any way. But people who exchange US dollars outside the country should seek out currency handlers who have reputations for charging the fairest fees. US officials advise.

"Holders of US currency worldwide can rest assured that the US government will not recall its currency," said Federal

The US currency has changed more than 12 times since 1785. Withrow noted that the new currency will retain its distinctive "American" look, with size, historical portraits and ink colors remaining the same. The cotton and linen paper will retain its unique crisp feel, Withrow said.

The new design will, however, include a number of other protective features, the most obvious being the enlargement of the portrait, which is also shifted to the left to accommodate a watermark. Microprinting and security threads, which first appeared in the 1990 series of US bills, have been retained in the new currency.

Protective features for the new \$100 note include: ■ A watermark to the right of the portrait depicting the same historical figure as the portrait. The watermark cannot be copied and is visible only when held up to a bright light.

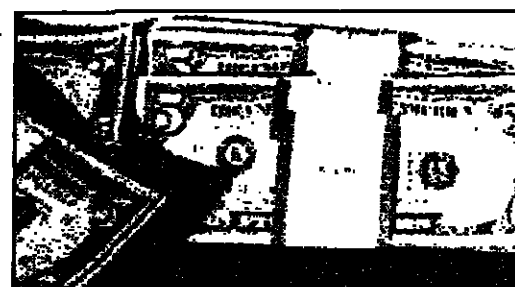
■ A security thread that will glow red when exposed to ultraviolet light. For added security, the thread will be in a unique position on each denomination.

■ Color-shifting ink. The number in the lower-right corner on the front of the note looks green when viewed straight on, but appears black when viewed at an angle.

■ Microprinting in the numeral in the note's lower left-hand corner and on the coat of Ben Franklin in the bill's portrait.

■ Concentric fine-line printing in the portrait and on the back of the note. This type of printing is extremely difficult to copy.

The release of the new \$100 bill marks the first in the series of newly designed notes, which will be released at the rate of about one a year. Protective features may vary according to denomination. The \$100 bill will have a full package of enhanced features, while the smaller denominations may have fewer features. The greatest strength of the new note series is the accumulation of different protective elements.



Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan. "As older notes reach the Federal Reserve from depository institutions, they will simply be replaced by the newer notes."

As new currency is being printed, the public education campaign is informing people worldwide that the new bill design is intended to help US currency maintain its edge against modern high-tech reprographic equipment such as color copiers, digital scanners, laser printers and computer publishing software.

"This is the first significant change in US currency since 1928, but altering the design of bills to improve security and maintain their integrity is nothing new," said US Treasurer Mary Ellen Withrow, who has been making public speaking appearances as part of the campaign.

Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 27 FEBRUARY

	Buy JD	Sell JD
	0.7080	0.7100
	1.0909	1.0964
	0.4875	0.4899
	0.5994	0.6024
	0.1395	0.1402
	0.6779	0.6813
	0.4353	0.4375
	0.0455	0.0457

MARKET WATCH

24-27 February

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
<p>↑ National Shipping Lines 5.06 ↑ Amman Investment Bank 1.28 ↑ B-Zey Ready Wear 1.27</p> <p>↓ Paratransit Paper Indust. 3.75 ↓ Jordan Phosphate Mines 2.19 ↓ Jordan Sulpho Chemicals 1.74</p>	<p>↑ Amman Investment Bank 3.80 ↑ Jordan Islamic Bank 3.11 ↑ Jordan Bank 3.10</p> <p>↓ Middle East Develop & Trade 5.41 ↓ Business Bank 4.76 ↓ Middle East Complex 4.05</p>	<p>↑ General Central Storage & Trade 4.55 ↑ Jordan Islamic Bank 3.02 ↑ Philadelphia Bank 2.24</p> <p>↓ Jordan Modern Cabals 3.15 ↓ United Truck Shipping Owners 2.99 ↓ Middle East Bank 1.09</p>	<p>↑ JIMCO 2.63 ↑ General Central Storage & Trade 1.45 ↑ Jordan Ceramic Factory 0.81</p> <p>↓ Amman Investment Bank 4.82 ↓ United Land Development 3.26 ↓ Int'l Textile Manufacture 4.08</p>
General Price Pointer 155.120	155.560	155.550	154.990
Trade Volume 282545	1263011	1213266	454239
Stock Volume 122359	422875	554048	230116
Highest Traded Stocks			
↑ Jordan National Bank 31.395	↑ Jordan Islamic Bank 249.006	↑ Jordan Islamic Bank 435.549	↑ Jordan Islamic Bank 61.075

All data provided by ACCESS Tel: 646668 Fax: 646949

Palestine Post

Edited by Marwan Al Asmar

Stripping the House?

Israel is now seeking to delete any misconception about the establishment of a Palestinian state, which many interpreted as in the offing. Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres was at pains to point out that such a state would not be established. Whether this was done purely for electioneering or for other ulterior motives is anyone's guess. To add insult to injury, only the other week the Israeli Interior Minister Mr Moshe Shahal decided to close the door of Orient House in East Jerusalem. The house, the non-official diplomatic Palestinian residence, is no longer allowed to meet any foreign dignitaries.

Feisal Al Hussein, the man charged with the Jerusalem portfolio, said that Mr Shahal had no right to impose such a decision which was against the Oslo Accords. He said the house was the headquarters of the Palestinian delegation to the negotiations with Israel. But this is not how Shahal saw it. He argued that allowing the Orient House to receive foreign ministers would be tantamount to allowing the Palestine National Authority to establishing the mechanisms for its foreign policy. This is of course totally rejected by Israel, since the aim is not to allow any modicum of Palestinian statehood.

Rotten food: Anyone's business

It seems that it doesn't only exist in this country: rotten food I mean. The head of the Criminal Investigation Department in Hebron, Major Dawoud Abu Ghaida said that a number of merchants were seeking to sell tons of rotten food in Hebron and Gaza City. He said his men apprehended the culprits who were selling expired foodstuffs, among which rotten cheese, at half price. The major said that his department will continue their investigations and anyone caught will be severely punished. He appealed to people to notify his department about any merchants selling expired goods.

Palestinian state in offing?

Haaretz, a Tel Aviv daily, reported that the Palestinians and Israeli officials have secretly drafted a proposal to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in which they call for a Palestinian state. This includes Israeli recognition of a Palestinian state without an army, continued Israeli sovereignty over most of the Jewish settlers in the West Bank, and Palestinian control over the Jordan Valley beginning in the year 2007.

The revelation came as the opposition Likud Party kicked off its campaign against the ruling Labor Party, portraying Prime Minister Shimon Peres as untrustworthy and ready to give away the store to Palestinians behind the backs of Israelis. Israeli Cabinet Minister Yossi Beilin, one of the architects of the Israeli-Palestinian peace accord and a close advisor to Peres, tried to minimize the report, but admitted that he had met several times with Palestinian Liberation Organization official Mahmoud Abbas to discuss a final settlement. He said they were trying to determine the "red lines" each side would bring to the bargaining table.

"I didn't have the authority to reach some sort of agreement, and we didn't reach a real agreement," Beilin said on Israeli army radio. "I got a picture that gave me a whole lot more optimism about the possibility of reaching an agreement."

The two sides apparently did not come to a full agreement on the issue of control over Jerusalem. Israel Occupied East Jerusalem in 1967 and claims the undivided city as its capital; the Palestinians want East Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state.

Without confirming the details, Beilin conceded that "certainly the spirit of the things, at least on some of the subjects, is correct."

Beilin and Mahmoud Abbas, known as Abu Mazen, were key figures in the secret Israeli-Palestinian negotiations in Oslo, Norway, that produced the 1993 peace agreement between Israel's Yitzhak Rabin and PLO chief Yasser Arafat. The Rabin government denied those talks were going on when they were.

Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu, who is challenging Peres, is likely to use Beilin's admission in the campaign. Netanyahu this charged that Peres was negotiating secretly over the fate of Jerusalem. His campaign slogan is "Peres will divide Jerusalem."

According to Haaretz, the Beilin-Abbas proposal talks about expanding Jerusalem's municipal boundaries under Israeli sovereignty, but leaves many details unresolved. Beilin has advocated the idea of a municipal umbrella under Israeli control with boroughs under Palestinian administration.

"We cannot ignore the fact that 170,000 Palestinians live in Jerusalem," said a Beilin aide.

Haaretz said the proposal also calls for large West Bank settlements to remain inside Israel. Jewish settlers in West Bank enclaves that would fall within Palestinian territory would be offered dual Israeli-Palestinian citizenship.

The proposal was presented to Peres and Arafat. Peres declined to comment, but was reportedly unhappy with several key points, including the idea of handing over of the Jordan Valley, along Israel's eastern border, which many military leaders considered key to Israeli security. Peres also is said to oppose an agreement that does not link the Palestinians to Jordan in a confederation.

In recent weeks, Beilin has publicly advocated that Peres's Labor Party remove a clause in its platform opposing the creation of a Palestinian state. But he said on Israeli television, "We are not establishing a Palestinian state. It is not our job. If you ask for my personal preference, it would be better for the Palestinians and for us that there be a Jordanian and Palestinian confederation."

Ahmed Qrei, one of the Palestinians' top negotiator with Israel, said it would be pointless for the two sides to have a secret agreement. "The permanent status (talks are) part of the (peace) agreement, and this is the main issue of the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians."

Despite bombs peace process continues, says Peres

Shahal said the guerrilla on the commuter bus in Jerusalem hid his bomb in an army kit bag and wore a disguise. "The fact is that no one noticed anything suspicious about him," he said.

By Barton Gellman
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM—The Egged No. 18 bus had just pulled to halt for a red light Sunday morning when, too quickly for eyes to follow or minds to grasp, the vehicle and its contents exploded into gruesome debris.

A fireball and a twisted steel skeleton were all that remained. Glass, flesh, upholstery and great hunks of aluminum were flung hundreds of yards in the 6:45 a.m. blast, spraying through car and apartment windows and onto nearby roofs.

The powerful suicide bombing made a charnel house of Jerusalem's northern traffic hub. A second blast ripped through a hitchhiking post for soldiers, less than an hour later and 45 miles away in the coastal city of Ashdod.

Together they killed at least 26 people, including two Americans. Scores were wounded, and at least 36 people remained in hospitals Sunday evening, 22 of them listed in "serious" or "very serious" condition.

It was the costliest day for Israel since it reached mutual recognition with the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1993 and began a process that has led to Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and part of the West Bank.

Anonymous callers from Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement, told Israel Radio's Arabic service and Reuters news agency that he bombings were meant to avenge the 5 January slaying of Hamas bomb-builder Yehiya Ayash with a booby-trapped cellular telephone. The callers also noted that Sunday marked the second anniversary of the Hebron massacre, in which a Jewish settler gunned down 29 Muslims kneeling at prayer.

The high toll and particular horror of last Sunday morning's televised images were seen by nearly all commentators as a momentary blow, at least, to Prime Minister Shimon Peres and his recently launched campaign for reelection on May 29.

So much has happened in the seven months since the last such attack—including the

assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, an Israeli army pull-back from the West Bank and the election of Yasser Arafat as Palestinian leader—that pollsters said it is hard to predict the long-term impact on public opinion.

Nearly all the political violence of the past two years has been a backlash by members of the losing sides of the Israeli and Palestinian domestic debates over peace.

The Hebron massacre, Rabin's murder and suicide bombings by Hamas and Islamic Jihad were all aimed explicitly by their authors at disrupting a process of accommodation that is backed nonetheless by majorities—albeit slim ones—of both publics.

Police said the Jerusalem bomb combined 22 to 44 pounds of high explosives with metal fragments meant to increase deadliness. The Ashdod bomb, which detonated 50 minutes later and killed two people, was similarly built and carried by a Palestinian in an Israeli army uniform who walked into a large group of soldiers gathering to ask for rides at a southern highway junction.

"He was dressed like an Israeli youngster, with the same (kind) of haircut and an earring," Police Minister Moshe Shahal said about the bomber in Ashdod. "He looked like any teenager from Israel. People probably thought that he looked like someone who was waiting for a ride."

Shahal said the guerrilla on the commuter bus in Jerusalem hid his bomb in an army kit bag and wore a disguise. "The fact is that no one noticed anything suspicious about him," he said.

The US Embassy in Tel Aviv identified the two dead Americans as Mattiahu Eisenfeld, 25, from Hartford, Conn., and his fiancée, Sarah Duker, from Teaneck, N.J. Both were students here.

Two other Americans, who were not identified, were treated and released for injuries in the Jerusalem blast.

"We've been telling Americans to stay off buses (in Israel), and we really mean it," embassy information officer Richard Scortza said.

Attack: leaders reactions

Surviving the scene of the attack, a heavily guarded Peres was booed and jeered by an angry crowd. "Peres go home!" they shouted, and "Peres is next!"—a chilling reference to the last prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, who was slain Nov. 4 by a right-wing Jew.

Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu said he would make no political comment on a day when the country was plunged into mourning. "This is a day of unity of the ranks, and that's what we'll do."

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat called the bombings "a crime, not only against innocent people but the peace process in its entirety." Arafat called Peres to offer his condolences to the families.

In recent meetings with Arafat, Peres said, he has urged a crackdown on Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, and has provided specific information from Israel's intelligence services on

would-be attackers.

"It's an illusion that the Palestinians will collaborate with us (to stop bombings)," said Eitan, leader of the far-right Tzomet Party, which recently teamed up with Likud for parliamentary elections on 29 May 29.

Political sources said Peres had repeatedly emphasized his fears of the political damage a terrorist attack could do to him and to Labor. Housing Minister Benjamin Ben Eliezer suggested several weeks ago that the government bans Palestinians from entering Israel until after the elections, and pay compensation to the Palestinian Authority for lost wages during that period.

One of Peres' first moves Sunday, in the wake of the double bombings, was to place a ban on the more than 50,000 Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank who cross daily into Israel to work.



ments we made, and neither the Hamas nor anyone else will move us from this," Peres told reporters. "At the same time, no one will stop us from acting against the Hamas with all means and in all ways."

Arafat, who once used to avoid comment about Hamas violence, sought out reporters Sunday in Gaza. He reacted forcefully when one of the reporters, using a commonplace Palestinian euphemism, asked his reaction to the "military operation" against Israel.

"It is not a military operation, it is a terrorist operation," he said. "I condemn it completely and I condemn any power behind it. It is not only against civilians, but against the whole peace process."

Michel Danino, 27, told Israel Television that he was driving past the Ashdod site when "suddenly I heard a terrible explosion," and a young woman soldier was flung through his rear window into his car. The soldier, Hofti Ayash, 20, was one of the two killed there.

"It was a horrible scene," Danino said. "There was lots of blood. People were screaming for help."

Most Israeli soldiers go home on Saturday for the Jewish Sabbath and return to their posts by chartered bus or organized hitchhiking routes. Previous suicide attacks, including a particularly lethal one last January at the Beit Lid junction near Netanya, have targeted soldiers assembling for their early Sunday morning transport.

The Jerusalem blast was audible for miles. Many Israelis, accustomed to frequent jet fighter overflights, instinctively listen after an explosion for the dull roar that follows an aircraft's sonic boom. When none came Sunday morning, the city switched on its radios and people began streaming toward the blast site on Jaffa Road, between the central bus station and the international convention center.

Later, the grim-faced premier said he had accepted a condolence call from Arafat but demanded that he act more firmly against Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

"We will keep all the com-

Likud charges Labor plans to divide Jerusalem

With highway billboards and newspaper ads declaring that "Peres will divide Jerusalem," it has become clear that Likud has deemed the emotionally charged issue their best shot in the face of opinion polls that give Peres a 15- to 19-point lead over Netanyahu in the race for prime minister.

By Marjorie Miller
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM—Israel's opposition Likud Party kicked off its underdog election campaign with a surprise move, accusing Prime Minister Shimon Peres of setting out to divide Jerusalem during final peace negotiations with the Palestinians.

Benjamin Netanyahu, the leader of the right-of-center Likud, called the upcoming national election "a referendum on Jerusalem." He charged that the government is holding secret talks in Europe on the status of Jerusalem, just as it secretly negotiated the peace agreement with the Palestine Liberation Organization in Oslo in 1993.

With highway billboards and newspaper ads declaring that "Peres will divide Jerusalem," it has become clear that Likud has deemed the emotionally charged issue their best shot in the face of opinion polls that give Peres a 15- to 19-point lead over Netanyahu in the race for prime minister.

"Today we are launching a campaign to prevent the division of Jerusalem," Netanyahu said. "The public must choose between a united Jerusalem under a Likud government and a divided Jerusalem under Labor."

Peres immediately denied any secret talks on the fate of Jerusalem or any intention of dividing the sacred city between Israel and the Palestinians. Leaders of his Labor Party counterpunched, accusing Likud of leading Palestinians to

believe that there is a split within Israel over Jerusalem and, therefore, a possibility of negotiating the city's division.

Israel captured the eastern half of the city from Jordan in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. The Palestinians want the predominantly Arab part of the city as the capital of an independent Palestinian state and will be starting from that position in final negotiations that are to begin in May.

The surprise Likud strategy is seen as an attempt to sidestep the fundamental issue of the Israeli-Palestinian peace accord—over which Peres' predecessor, Yitzhak Rabin, was assassinated by a Jewish law student.

Netanyahu has long opposed the 1993 agreement between Rabin and PLO leader Yasser Arafat, whom he still considers a terrorist. Nearly half of the country agreed with him until Rabin's murder. But recent opinion polls in favor of the peace process and the Labor Party forced Netanyahu to accept that the agreement was a

fait accompli and left him searching for a campaign issue.

The new issue is Jerusalem, which Israelis call their "eternal and undivided capital." The city is holy to Muslims, and Christians as well. But Jews have considered Jerusalem theirs since it was conquered by King David nearly 3,000 years ago and have fought repeatedly for control of it.

When the Old City of Jerusalem was under Jordanian rule, Jews were not allowed to visit their holiest site—the Western Wall that represents the

destroyed second Jewish temple.

By focusing on Jerusalem, Likud aims to grab Israelis with a gut issue that cuts across ideological lines and, the party hopes, distracts the country from the emotional issue of Rabin's assassination.

Peres' Cabinet secretary, Shmuel Hollander, called the Likud charges "groundless" and said: "The government is completely united around the principle of the non-division of Jerusalem. The claims made by Likud on this issue are tantamount to incitement."

Health Minister Ephraim Sneh added that the Likud slogan "recalls the incitement against Rabin. This may end in yet another assassination."

Rabin was assassinated Nov. 4 by a right-wing Jew who opposed his land-for-peace agreement with Arafat.

Likud had branded Rabin a "traitor" and "murderer" over the peace accord, Rabin's widow, Leah, and Labor leaders accused Likud of creating a climate of violence that led to the murder.

The exact date of the vote still must be negotiated between the government and opposition, but Israeli television reported that Labor will be pushing for 14 May, an even earlier date than previously mentioned. Other possibilities are 28 May and 4 June.



Netanyahu

World Bank helps rebuild war-torn economies

By Courtney J. Dirsch
USIA Staff Writer

WASHINGTON—THE World Bank says it is embarking on a number of steps to rebuild the increasing number of economies ravaged by civil war.

The Bank said in a statement issued February 13 that its efforts will help restore economic growth and repair the damage to the societies and people torn apart by civil strife, thus providing a main ingredient for lasting peace.

In its post-conflict reconstruction efforts, the World Bank said it would target resources at: decentralizing local investments; reintegrating populations displaced by war; demobilizing and subsequently training and finding job placements for soldiers; and, in Bosnia and Angola, overseeing large-scale demining.

In the West Bank and Gaza, for example, the World Bank is currently working on projects designed to increase the capital base and provide for long-term employment. Longer-term projects are not feasible at this time due to uncertain security situations and fiscal crises faced by the Palestinian Authority, the Bank said.

In Angola, the World Bank said it is helping to demobilize and reintegrate approximately 100,000 ex-combatants from both sides through both quick-impact training and the creation of income producing activities.

In Bosnia, priority reconstruction needs are estimated at \$5,100 million over the next three to four years. In cooperation with the European Union, the World Bank has established a \$150 million trust fund for civilian reconstruction and has proposed a series of emergency recovery projects designed to help both small- and medium-sized Bosnian enterprises and the poorest segments of society.

In December 1995, a number of countries and organizations pledged to Bosnia the \$518 million needed to finance the first three months of reconstruction, the World Bank noted.

In Cambodia, the government and the World Bank are aiming to demobilize and reintegrate 40,000 ex-combatants by 1997, it said. They are also giving priority to controlling the spread of diseases, mainly tuberculosis.

In an effort to reintegrate the approximately 500,000 Eritrean refugees in Sudan, the World Bank and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees established a program whose pilot phase has resulted in the return of some 25,000 Eritreans.

The World Bank has joined donor agencies and other regional and international organizations to help the greater Horn of Africa by establishing crop seed banks located strategically throughout the region, to help rehabilitate domestic food production in emergency situations.

By Daniel Williams
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

Hussein Kamel

Political maneuvers in the age of UN sanctions

AMMAN, Jordan—Seven months ago, Hussein Kamel Hassan Majid, a brutal lieutenant of Saddam Hussein and the chief of Iraq's secret weapons program, was a potential superstar among international defectors. Last Friday, in one of the Middle East's remarkable twists of fortune, he was gunned down days after returning to Baghdad, by assailants Iraq described as angry relatives.

Hussein Kamel fled Iraq in August with his brother, Saddam Kamel Hassan Majid, and their wives, both daughters of the Iraqi president Saddam Hussein. Their exit was regarded as a sure sign of rot in Baghdad. American intelligence agents rushed to harvest secrets he brought. Presenting himself as savior of his nation, Hussein Kamel called for Iraqis to revolt.

Last week, he re-defected and returned home embittered. His Jordanian hosts had shunned him. The Americans, finding his information unreliable, dropped him. Iraqi exiles rejected him as a Saddam clone—just as cruel and untrustworthy—and refused to follow his lead.

Hussein Kamel should have known the risk he was taking. Before his defection, he himself was regarded as one of Saddam's cruelest enforcers, overseeing the bloody repression of government opponents. Iraq said that Saddam had pardoned the returning defectors. But late Friday evening, the Iraqi Interior Ministry announced that Hussein Kamel and his brother and fellow defectors were killed by relatives who attacked the family home in Baghdad. Hussein Kamel's father and another brother were also killed, along

with two of the attackers, the ministry said.

The report was broadcast just hours after the government news agency issued an ominous announcement: Saddam's daughters had both divorced the "failed traitors." The Iraqi Embassy in Amman confirmed both accounts.

Hussein Kamel's adventure is an object tale of how things can go wrong for a defector who is neither valuable enough nor virtuous enough for his new friends to even lead on with promises. Best known for cruelly squashing a Shiite Muslim revolt in southern Iraq, Hussein Kamel was regarded as too onerous a killer to consider salvaging. "Hussein Kamel was always just another killer in a designer suit," a Western diplomat who followed his case said coldly.

US officials say Hussein Kamel was not as useful a defector as they had hoped. He produced only limited information on Iraq's secret program to build nuclear, chemical and biological weapons or its clandestine foreign network to procure materials for them, officials said.

"He was supposed to be a source of intelligence, but he contributed remarkably little," said Anthony H. Cordesman, a specialist in Iraqi military

affairs at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. The major information windfall from his defection came directly from Iraq, Pentagon and State Department officials said. In reaction to Hussein Kamel's arrival in Jordan, Baghdad unexpectedly released over 100 boxes of information about the Iraqi missile, chemical and biological program that had been withheld. The disclosures in turn made UN officials wary of Baghdad's reliability.

The most important impact of his defection was forcing Iraq to leak those documents that showed Iraq had been lying for four years about its program," said a senior State Department official. "They have only dug the Iraqi hole deeper at the UN," he added, noting that right after the disclosures, both Russia and France had stopped pushing for an easing of the onerous UN economic sanctions.

Hussein Kamel was also a poor magnet for anti-Saddam Iraqi dissidents. Major groups refused to meet with him. "Most of the outside opposition wants nothing to do with Hussein Kamel," a senior Pentagon official commented recently. "The opposition has basically said, 'You used to kill us. Now you're going to be one of us?'"



Hussein Kamel: Pondering before his return to Iraq

"We don't trust you."

"He meant zero to the opposition. He could not persuade anyone to join or accept him," said Read Francke, executive director of the Iraqi Foundation, a forum for the Iraqi opposition in Washington.

Francke said that Hussein Kamel—despite his rank of general—had been unable to attract other senior Iraqi officers or political figures to defect, disappointing both Jordan and the United States. "He had no credibility. He didn't deliver anything," Francke said.

Jordan had given Saddam Hussein moral support during the Persian Gulf War and has had a difficult time living it down. Jordan is eager to restore relations with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Last fall, however, Hussein Kamel's usefulness in even this campaign waned. A Jordanian official said. It soon became clear that his guest had no sway over the Iraqi military

and no chance of toppling his father-in-law.

Hussein Kamel had a different, glorious script in mind. Having fled Iraq after a family feud, he predicted that parts of the army would rise up in his name. As a manager of Iraq's military industry, he was intimate with the most closely guarded secrets of the regime and thought he could trade them for American backing, US and Jordanian officials said.

In August, he appeared at a news conference held on the grounds of one of his Majesty King Hussein's palaces. In his double-breasted suit and bristly bush moustache, he seemed almost a twin of Saddam. "We'll work to overthrow the existing regime," he said.

Hussein Kamel was housed at various mansions in Jordan, although the Jordanian government gave out a sole address, the Hashemiyah Palace on the outskirts of Amman. He lived in isolation with his wife,

Raghad, and their three children, along with his brother Saddam, his wife, Rana, and two offspring.

Only once was he reported to have left his confines—to visit a hospital for a checkup.

Jordanian and American interrogators stopped approaching two months after he arrived. The fountain of information was deemed dry, a Jordanian official said. As early as October, Hussein Kamel considered leaving Jordan for other countries and contacted Syria.

In mid-December, he published a plan to form a "Higher Council for the Salvation of Iraq" with himself as leader. "The phased program" contained a stinging indictment of Saddam Hussein's "autocratic rule" and "irresponsible policies of internal suppression" as well as his "ignition of wars" which Hussein Kamel blamed for Iraq's global isolation.

The document noted "the inevitability of the collapse of despotic regimes which rely on terrorism and fear" and called for "change by all means" to establish a "pluralist, parliamentary and democratic system."

No one took up his plan. And his presence began to be unwelcome. When Hussein Kamel finally decided he would like to transfer to Syria, King Hussein said that he would have to leave the spouses and children behind. In effect, his only way out was to

Baghdad.

Jordanian officials began to hint that Hussein Kamel ought to return home. In a 4 January interview with *Ad Dustur*, the then foreign minister and current prime minister, Abdel Karim Kabariti, said that just as Hussein Kamel was "most welcome when he came, when he wishes to leave, we will treat him the same way."

The government also permitted a new anti-Iraqi group to open offices in Amman—a message that Hussein Kamel was no longer useful in the campaign to oust Saddam.

Hussein Kamel began to strike back. He praised minor reforms in Iraq and criticized King Hussein's proposals for a kind of pan-Arab, anti-Iraq front.

A dispute between Hussein Kamel and a local journalist provided the Jordanians with a convenient means to turn up the heat. Nayef Tawarah, editor of *Al Bilad* weekly, told Hussein Kamel of plans to publish his comments critical of the king. The defector made heated threats on Tawarah's life. "I will cut you up piece by piece," he said in a phone conversation that Tawarah recorded.

"He was definitely unstable," Tawarah said.

Tawarah, who is a friend of Prime Minister Kabariti, announced he would sue the Iraqi. The government quickly told Hussein Kamel would have to stand trial if a judge so ordered, a Jordanian official

said. This was all too much for a former general accustomed to acting with impunity. He called the Iraqi ambassador to work out details of a return. Last week, he told reporters that he had sent a letter to Saddam inquiring about a return home and the "initial response was positive."

And hence, he drove away in the same three-Mercedes Benz caravan that brought him across the desert to Amman from Baghdad. He left behind some officers who decided not to go back and a cousin who happened to be in Turkey.

Jordanian officials washed their hands of him. He received no official send-off, only a security escort to the border. "We wanted to make sure nothing happened to him in Jordan," said former prime minister Marwan Qassem. "Once he entered Iraq, it became a problem between Iraq and his government."

Dissatisfying as he was to the Americans and Jordanians, he was certainly more galling to Saddam Hussein. Ordinary Jordanians regarded his return this week as suicidal—unless the whole defection was a fake.

The Iraqi government marked his arrival with a brief statement. "The leadership took a decision to accept his appeal... to return as an ordinary citizen," the announcement said.

Uday Hussein, a son of Saddam and an old rival of Hussein Kamel, met him across the border. Jordanians, who were following the defector's return with morbid curiosity, regarded the reunion as a good sign for the re-unifier.

But it was Uday's TV station that gave out the news of Hussein Kamel's death.

Iraqi embassy spokesman Adel Ibrahim said that Hussein Kamel and his brother were killed by relatives who stormed their house. Some of the invaders were killed as well, he said.

Hussein Kamel Hassan

- 37 years old.
- Was married to Saddam Hussein's daughter, Raghad, in 1986 and has four children.
- Before the invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, he was Minister of Industry and Mines and in charge of the Iraqi Armament Program.
- In April 1991 he became Minister of Defence.
- In February 1992 he became Presidential Advisor for Reconstruction in charge of infrastructural reconstruction after the

- In 1993 he became the Minister of Industry and Mines, and Director of the Executive Bureau (a military intelligence structure that covered the institutions and companies designated to secretly obtain technologies for military industrialization).
- Member of the "confidential bureau" (the supreme ruling circle which includes the President, top officials of the Intelligence and Security system).
- In August 1995 he defected to Jordan.

How it happened according to reporter

HUSSEIN KAMEL had been holding talks with Baghdad since early February on plans to return. Saddam sent several emissaries including Madhar Al Kharbei, a prominent businessman to see Kamel in Amman, according to an Iraqi Broadcasting Corporation's (IBC) reporter in Baghdad.

When Hussein Kamel and Saddam Kamel returned with their wives to Iraq, they were met at the border by Uday who had his sisters separated and put in a different car. The two brothers were driven to Tikrit. Their sister, the wife of Major Azzedine was with them. Major Azzedine remained in Amman, promising to return to Iraq later. Being met by a hostile group of Saddam supporters in Tikrit, Kamel went to his sister's house in Baghdad, the reporter said.

The divorces were arranged by Uday against his sisters' will. Uday summoned the

religious judge and made him pronounce divorces without either husbands or wives being present, the reporter added.

Last Friday evening at 8 pm a group of 40 armed men arrived at Kamel's sister's house. This group was led by Ali Hassan Al Majid (Chemical Ali). Uday and Quasbi were present but did not take part in the attack, the reporter said.

There was an exchange of gunfire for one and a half hours. Kamel's group ran out of ammunition and Hussein Kamel came out of the house. He was wounded in the leg and asked the attackers to stop shooting. They killed him and entered the house.

Saddam Kamel was killed by a RPG round. The attackers killed Kamel's other brother, father and sister. Three of the attackers were killed, the IBC reporter added. ■

Killings of defectors cement Saddam Hussein's power

By John Daniszewski
LA Times-Washington Post News Service

CAIRO, EGYPT—The speedy elimination of Saddam Hussein's son-in-law after the country's most famous defector was lured back to Baghdad has proven once again the ruthlessness of Iraq's iron-fisted leader and shown that his grip on power is now more secure than ever five years after the Persian Gulf War, analysts said Saturday.

As he has in the past, Hussein sent a warning to all would-be opponents, including any that might exist within his own tight family circle, that the penalty for betraying him is death, the analysts said.

It is now considered unlikely that Hussein will ever face a meaningful challenge to his power from inside Iraq. Moreover, the way may now be cleared for a Hussein dynasty, with his son Uday waiting in the wings as a possible successor.

Iraqi state-controlled media portrayed the death of Lt. Gen. Hussein Kamel Majid and his brother and fellow defector Saddam Kamel Majid—both married to Saddam Hussein's daughters—until Thursday, when the women divorced them—as the result of divisions inside the influential Majid clan.

Those divisions, the state media said, led to a pitched gunfight Friday afternoon at the suburban Baghdad villa where the defectors had lived since returning Tuesday from Jordan. According to the state media, the two defectors, their father and a third brother were killed by cousins who demanded their blood to remove the stain on the family honor caused by the betrayal of their high-profile defection in August.

That account, however, found little credence among analysts and the Iraqi opposition in exile, especially after the state endorsed the killings by awarding a heroes' funeral to two men who died storming the Majids' home.

"Saddam Hussein cannot tolerate any questioning of his authority and needed to make an example of these two," said Michael Barron, senior Middle East analyst with the Control Risks Group consulting firm in London.

"It was a fairly brutal display of power," Jordanian Foreign Minister Karim Kabariti expressed indignation at the killings, saying that the defectors had left their sanctuary in the Jordanian capital, Amman, only because they "were given the impression that they would

be safe and they were pardoned."

The US ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, said of Hussein, "His brutality knows no bounds."

Such criticism will make no difference to Hussein, according to the analysts, because his only concern is staying in power. And with the cold-blooded elimination of his own sons-in-law, he has removed any chance of an internal threat.

"No one is going to dare try anything," Barron said. Even if international disgust at the killings hurts Iraq in its talks with the United Nations to resume international oil sales, the effect will be short-lived, said Jordanian political scientist Labib Kamhawi, a veteran Iraqi observer. "Worse episodes were forgotten in their time."

The killings put to rest any lingering suspicions about whether Hussein Kamel Majid's defection was authentic. During his six month Jordanian exile, Majid—who had run the military-industrial complex responsible for Iraq's secret weapons program—was shunned by other foes of his father-in-law because it was felt that such a close associate of the Iraqi leader should not be trusted.

Disappointment at his continued isolation in Jordan, the persistent pleas of his wife, Raghad, to return, and assurances from family intermediaries that he would be safe in Baghdad were behind his fatal decision to go back.

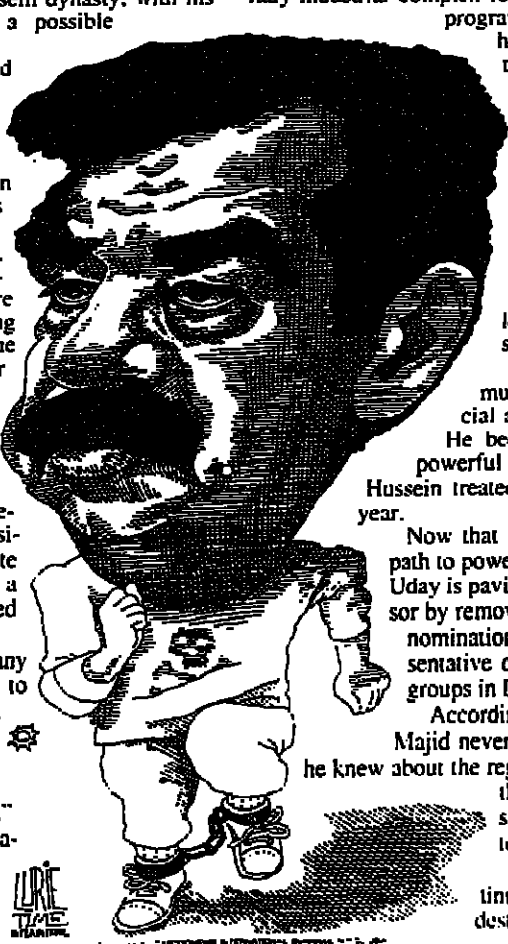
What remains unclear is what role Uday Hussein, the Iraqi leader's violent and ambitious eldest son, may have had in the killings.

Uday has been blamed for several murders and is described by a US official as "truly one of the world's thugs."

He became by default the second-most powerful person in Iraq when Majid—whom Hussein treated like a son—fled the country last year.

Now that Majid has been eliminated, Uday's path to power is apparently clear. "We think that Uday is paving the way to be his father's successor by removing anybody who might oppose his nomination," said Dr. Hamid Bayati, a representative of one of the main Iraqi opposition groups in London.

According to US sources, while in exile Majid never fully cooperated in revealing what he knew about the regime. But his defection so unnerved the Iraqis that they turned over thousands of pages of secret documents to the United Nations—a stunning admission that Iraq had been continuing work on weapons of mass destruction in violation of its promises.



President SADDAM HUSSEIN of Iraq

Americans in Middle East remain mindful of terrorism threat

By Nicholas Goldberg
LA Times-Washington Post News Service

CAIRO—A month after the sentencing of Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman, the blind Egyptian imam who was convicted of plotting to blow up

buildings and bridges around New York City, Americans in the Middle East are still treading lightly and watching nervously to see what retaliatory violence, if any, will follow.

At the American Embassy here, security precautions have been tightened. Nonemployees must not only check in and out of each building, but must also sign in on every floor they visit. Tape recorders are not allowed because they might explode. Armed guards are omnipresent inside and outside the walled, fortress-like complex.

In the Sudan, where the Islamic government is perceived to be supporting fundamentalists in Egypt, American diplomats were recently withdrawn altogether after what was described only as "specific threats."

And for Americans traveling through the region, there is still a warning in place, advising that there may be an increase in terrorist acts carried out by the sheikh's supporters.

"We'd be foolish not to take these threats seriously—very seriously," said US Ambassador Edward Walker in an interview last week. "You have no idea how professional these guys are. They have a track record that has shown that again and again."

The organization most closely tied to Abdel-Rahman is Gamaa Islamiya, an Egyptian Islamic organization seeking to overthrow the secular government here and replace it with an Islamic state. In the aftermath of the conviction,

Gamaa warned that it would consider "all American interests" to be legitimate targets until the release of the sheikh, who serves as the group's spiritual leader.

Gamaa is one of two militant Islamic organizations—the other is the Jihad group—that split off from the nonviolent Muslim Brotherhood in the mid-1970s and has been waging war with the Egyptian government ever since. According to academics and diplomats, Jihad and its offshoots, which have their base of support in Cairo, tend to focus on government officials and institutions. These are the people who killed Anwar Sadat in 1981 and have made attempts on the lives of numerous other high level officials.

Gamaa, by contrast, gets its support from outside the city, and terrorism experts say it is less discerning in its approach. More likely to kill innocent civilians along the way, Gamaa and its offshoots are believed to be behind most of the violence that has been carried out against tourists in recent years in upper Egypt, as well as the bombing of the Egyptian embassy in Pakistan last November that killed 15 people and wounded about 60 others.

"Gamaa will take the battle anywhere—they'll hit an embassy anywhere in the world or blow up the World Trade Center just because it serves their purpose, or sends a message that they are an actor to be dealt with," said Saad Eddin Ibrahim, a professor of political sociology at the American University in Cairo and an expert on Islamic militants. "Their purpose is to set up an Islamic order, one that follows the precepts of Islamic law as laid out in the Sharia, and of the Koran."

The Egyptian government



Abdel-Rahman

has been in a dirty war with the two armed underground groups for decades—a war in which few resources have been spared, and few niceties observed. Groups such as Middle East Watch and the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights have long bemoaned the unnecessary killing and brutality on both sides, and have been particularly critical of what they called the government's heavy-handed response. Acts of murder by armed opposition groups, Human Rights Watch noted in a recent report, do not give the state license to abandon longstanding human rights standards.

But despite the distasteful methods used by the government, many observers now believe the war is winding down—and that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has won. Today, according to senior American diplomats, neither Jihad nor Gamaa has much grass-roots support other than in isolated provinces far outside the cities. The Mubarak government, which had appeared at points

to be fighting for its life, is feeling less threatened.

At the American Embassy, the focus is back on the Egyptian economy—privatizing it and opening it up to foreign investment, mostly—and, to the delight of the government here, tourism is up. A report released by the Tourism Ministry last week showed a 21 percent increase in tourism in 1995 over 1994.

But others are warning that it may be premature to celebrate victory over Islamic extremism in Egypt. One theory holds that the successful repression of Gamaa and Jihad here has led them to move their activities elsewhere.

There are several indications of this. One was the killing last year of an Egyptian diplomat in Geneva, which received little media attention at the time. Of even more concern was the unsuccessful attempt on Mubarak in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, last summer, and the subsequent fleeing of the would-be assassins to the Sudan.

Most significant was the bloody attack on the embassy in Islamabad. "I have no doubt that they hit their target in Pakistan because they were unable to hit it here," said one Western diplomat in Cairo.

In the meantime, according to experts, Americans should be concerned both at home and abroad. Not panicked, but concerned.

"There is a feeling among these groups that it's not a local battle but a worldwide one," said Mohammed Sid Ahmed, a prominent political analyst here. "They have come to see themselves as part of an all-exclusive world where they owe nothing to the world outside. And when that world outside aggresses, it is a form of aggression against them, and they find it legitimate to hit back, whenever and where ever they can." ■

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The bill for genetically engineered food frightens many

Private businesses are sowing the seeds of a new revolution

In the struggle to keep the world's food supply in step with its growing population, many expect the so-called Gene Revolution to take over from the Green Revolution. But disputed property rights and the profit motive may prevent this changing of the guard

By Cameron Brandt

SINCE THE 1950s, farmers protesting agricultural policy can thank the Green Revolution for having more, and fatter, tomatoes to throw at the politicians. In the future, those tomatoes are likely to have more density and stay fresh through several rallies—advances attributable to another revolution that may well be the subject of the farmers' ire.

The so-called Gene Revolution is often touted as the successor to the Green Revolution that has transformed the world's agriculture. But it appears reluctant to don the mantle. While the promise of manipulating the genetic material of plants and animals—in terms of improved food supplies—remains vast, two decades of experience suggest that the impact of the Gene Revolution will be markedly different from its predecessor.

The main reasons for this are:

Genetic research and development are capital intensive, requiring sophisticated equipment and highly trained people. Much of the work to date has been done by private businesses such as WR Grace, Ciba-Geigy, DuPont, Mitsui Toatsu and Monsanto. As a result, much research is skewed towards outcomes that are profitable in developed countries—tomatoes with a longer shelf life, for instance—and away from subsistence issues. Growing more food in developing countries is not the main goal. Manipulating DNA, or splicing one piece to another is a very specific process. Often, the results are too. Instead of creating broad improvements, genetically engineering plants and animals tends to enhance one attribute or make them better for a specific region. The results advances in the technology-rich West frequently do not apply to the environments found in developing countries.

Also, the genetic "improvements" typi-

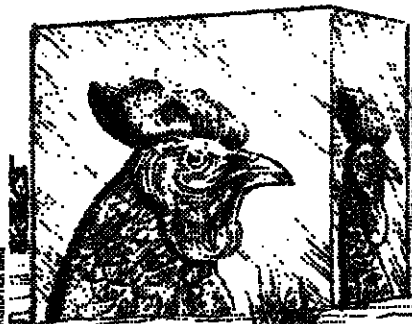
cally last for one generation or growing season, leaving farmers without access to publicly-funded biotechnology products to choose between paying a private supplier each year or foregoing the gains in production.

The broad consensus that propelled the Green Revolution is absent. While that consensus eroded as some of the environmental costs became apparent, the Gene Revolution ran into controversy from the start. The ethics of manipulating genetic material, concerns that genetically altered plants and animals will upset the environment and fear that foodstuffs will go from a common resource to a collection of private property rights—all these have sparked protests, lawsuits, boycotts and even riots.

Should people pin any hopes on this selective, controversial and expensive revolution? Experts say yes. Many of the advances so far have come in the areas of pest resistance and improved storage, which should cut into the huge losses of food that is grown but does not make it to the table. Genetic engineering also holds out the promise of plant varieties that do not need as much fertilizers and pesticides as the Green Revolution's staple varieties.

If developing countries are to realize these benefits, however, they are probably going to have to do it themselves.

In the opinion of microbiologist Ananda Chakrabarty, professor of microbiology at the University of Illinois at Chicago who has received many honors in the field of genetic engineering, Third World countries must do the research to solve their own problems, because the industrialized countries probably won't do it for them. "Most of the technology is being developed in the industrialized nations—the United States, Japan, Western Europe. The idea is that they will sell it to the developing countries. But those are the ones with the least



money to buy it," he observes.

One area of the Gene Revolution that has made great strides, both North and South, is the stockpiling and cataloging of the revolution's raw material. Countries ranging from Ethiopia to the US have begun to bank samples of plant and animal species whose genetic material may be needed in the future.

In the opinion of Keith Hammond at the Food and Agriculture Organization's Animal Genetic Resources Group, this stockpiling is vital to the success of the Gene Revolution. According to Hammond, 90 percent of the world's production of animal-related agricultural products come from 14 species. Of the 4,500 varieties of these species, over 30 percent were at "high risk of loss" around the time of the United Nations 1992 Rio Earth Summit.

What will happen with these genetic resources is still an open question. But Chakrabarty believes that, despite ethical and environmental concerns in the developed world, they must be pressed into service. "If biotechnology can provide food for the starving, or cure illnesses of those doomed to die, people that aren't hungry or sick have no moral right to object," he says.

CAMERON BRANDT is The World Paper's MANAGING EDITOR.

Preservation of existing genetic resources should be first step

Fields bare of both miracles and disasters

By Nancy Hart

WHEN DR. CARY FOWLER wants to emphasize a point about the importance of preserving plant genetic diversity on this planet, he goes to his computer where he is in the process of writing *The Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Diversity*.

He clicks on one bit of text that displays the number of gene samples in the world's gene banks. In 1959, there were 363,984 samples in fewer than 10 gene banks. Today, there are 5.4 million samples in 1,308 gene banks. He clicks on another document called "cabbages." In 1903, there were 544 varieties of cabbages being grown in the United States. Today, only 28 of those varieties survive. That is a loss of 95 percent. Then he moves onto a page of the Internet that has the latest information about a potato blight circling the globe. All he says is, "I hope you like rice."

From his paper-strewn office in the headquarters of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome, Fowler has spent the last two years organizing the Fourth International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources that is set for this summer (June 17-23) in Leipzig, Germany. This conference will be held on the governmental level for the first time with the goal of having governments agree that there is a need to preserve the world's plant genetic resources and that a global plan of action needs to be followed.

The greatest good

"It's always a lot easier to get consensus than commitment," said Fowler, whose staff has gone to more than 100 countries to help with assessments and has held 11 meetings with 155 countries. To date, 148 countries have completed their assessments and prepared country reports.

So what is the state of the world's plant genetic resources? Can he tell us how the book will end?

"Since we never had a head count on creation, we don't know the rate of extinction," he explained. "We know a lot is gone."

And for that reason, Fowler has spent the last two decades researching, writing books and lecturing, using a combination of humor and off-beat facts to get the attention of his audiences so he can sell them on the idea that the plants of the world must be respected.

"The United States is not a rich

area in terms of genetic resources," he said, explaining that sunflowers, Jerusalem artichokes, hops and a few forage grasses are about the only crops that originated there and "they certainly wouldn't make a good Thanksgiving dinner—although they would still have the turkey."

"The US has completely imported agriculture. Immigrants brought their own seeds, shared them with their neighbors and created a lot of diversity," he observes.

Much of that diversity has slipped away. In the 1800s, the US Department of Agriculture listed more than 7,000 varieties of apples in the US. By the 1980s, all but 200 of those apple varieties listed the century before had become extinct.

"I used to take a list of the names of the extinct apples when I made talks. I didn't tell members of the audience what it was about. I just asked them to raise their hands if they saw their names on the list. Always, at least two thirds would raise their hands. When I told them that the name on the list was actually the name of an extinct apple variety that had their family name, it always got the point across. They would realize that their ancestors had given their names to a variety of apple and now it was lost."

When one woman asked Fowler to help her find an apple she remembered from her childhood, the *magnum bonum* (greatest good), Fowler went to the mountains of Virginia and started looking. He met the owner of a commercial orchard who grew thousands of apple trees. The man said he had converted the orchard to modern varieties, but that he had saved three *magnum bonum* trees just because he thought they were good. He said he'd expected that someone might ask about them someday.

"They were probably the last three *magnum bonum* trees on earth," said Fowler, who took a few apples and twigs back to the woman who had asked for them. "We had a party with the apples and grafted the twigs onto root stock."

The single-gene defense

In today's world, genetic engineering is a fancy and powerful way of doing things farmers and plant breeders have been doing for thousands of years, which is recombining genes. What's new is that new technologies allow for the transfer of genes across a wide variety of species. One attempt is being made to transfer genes from fish (brouder) to plants, to create

plants that will survive in the cold.

"I don't get too excited about genetic engineering in terms of potential or threat. I think both are frequently exaggerated," says Fowler. With all the promise, there aren't too many miracles growing in fields. But also, no disasters. I think what they've done to tomatoes is a crime against humanity, unless you want to use tomatoes as baseballs."

He describes his work as "preserving options," adding that, "Because as a species, we are still not smart enough to know what we are going to need in the future."

Fowler says we are now squandering genes. "One gene is chosen to transfer into a new variety to fight a certain pest or disease. But the pest can mutate to get around that one-gene defense, because usually plants have multiple gene defenses to diseases. But if we take all the genes, they may come with other problems, like a different shape or the wrong color. So by choosing to take the single gene, we pay the price later."

In a book Fowler wrote on biotechnology in 1988, *The Laws of Life*, he acknowledged the potential for good but pointed to the downsides, including the potential for biological warfare.

"You can have great power to benefit society with the technology, but others could use it to create new diseases. What better way to defeat our enemy than destroy its agriculture. It could redefine the rules of war," said Fowler.

He compared biotechnology to the invention of the automobile, which originally was thought of only as transportation. But the automobile polluted the air, created suburbs, changed life patterns.

"Technologies almost always come with more effects than you can perceive in the beginning," he explained. "The more powerful the technology, the bigger the effect."

NANCY HART IS A ROME-BASED WRITER SPECIALIZING IN THE ECOLOGICAL AND AGRICULTURAL PROBLEMS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

"Economic suicide pact" grafted onto sub-continent's statute book

Instead of revolutionaries, Indians see bio-pirates

By Sharmila Joshi

WHEN INDIA JOINED the World Trade Organization (WTO), many believed that their country's government had signed an economic suicide pact. Among the changes needed to comply with WTO regulations is a shift from process to product patents. A Patents (Amendment) Bill has been submitted by the Indian government to achieve this. If it passes—and oppo-

nents have so far blocked its passage—it will allow foreign companies to patent agricultural and horticultural products, something the existing Indian Patent Act disallows. Genetically manipulated plants and seeds, for instance, could be patented even if the original plant is native to India.

In the opinion of the bill's opponents, it indicates the government's willingness to elevate the interests of multi-

national corporations over those of the nation. Opposition is being mobilized through the National Campaign Against Patents on Life, a coalition of non-governmental organizations whose views echo those of the eminent Indian jurist, Justice V. R. Krishna Iyer. "For too long have the multinational corporations and their collaborator classes beguiled the poor here with their high-tech opium," said Iyer.

Although the government has stated that the legislation will protect Indian trees, vegetation and herbs from patents filed by foreign companies, many politicians and activists are not convinced.

"The universalization of TRIPS (the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights agreement) under the WTO means that national laws which protect domestic innovation and manufacturing will have to be altered to conform with the patent laws of developed countries," observes Vanda Shiva, director of the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and National Research Policy.

There are other questions that op-



Letting the genie out of the bottle? Genetic research in India

PHOTO: SHARMA JOSTI

► BIO-PIRACY PAGE 2

THE WORLD PAPER

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Controversy over genetic manipulation bypasses Argentina

Scientists trying to engineer prosperity

By Allie Johnson

FOR ARGENTINA, genetically-engineered products like insect-zapping sunflowers and animal vaccines could translate into billions of dollars and help the country share its best products—including beef and wine—with the rest of the world.

Years after the so-called Green Revolution changed the face of agriculture, Argentine scientists say that developing countries will have to find a clean, smart way to launch a second revolution—and genetic engineering may be this way. A "Gene Revolution" could also have handsome cash benefits.

Argentina's scientists are already working with their counterparts in the US and Europe, seeking genetic mix-and-matches that will dramatically improve production of sunflowers, cotton, wheat, potatoes and beef, the country's agricultural king. There are also hopes for boosting exports of the country's red wines.

Lethal sunflowers

According to researchers at the Molecular Biology Institute (MBI), Argentina—already the world's largest exporter of sunflowers—could cash in on a genetic engineering project within three years. Genes from the *bacillus thuringiensis* have been injected into sunflowers, and insects trying to eat this new variety get a lethal dose of insect-specific poison.

This and other plant-related projects have the potential to boost Argentina's agricultural exports by US\$5 billion a year, predicts Eduardo Palma, director of the MBI. Genetic engineering relating to cattle could account for \$400 million of that total, he estimates.

Despite its quality, Argentine beef is presently exported in modest quantities. That could change if Argentina's National Agricultural Technology Institute (INTA) can engineer vaccinations for foot and mouth disease and other threats to cattle. Better vaccinations would allow Argentina to export beef from cattle fattened on the grasses of the Pampas region, a product countries like the US and Japan would probably welcome because it is lower in fat and cholesterol.

One of INTA's goals is to develop vaccines for cattle that do not involve the manipulation of live viruses, said Alejandro Schundel, the institute's director of virology. "Developing this vaccine would mean we'd be safe. We've nearly eradicated the disease already," says Schundel of foot and mouth disease.

A new vaccine would also mean greatly reduced spending, as the costly temperature-controlled tanks used to store conventional vaccines are a drain on resources. Argentina currently requires an estimated 4.5 million doses of conventional vaccines be kept on hand in a given year to combat the three strains of foot and mouth virus that have plagued the country.

More export options

Developing viral resistance is also the goal of the Genetic Engineering and Molecular Biology Research Institute, which is working on two varieties of potato native to Argentina. According to Alejandro Mentaberry, who is heading this project, Argentina's average production is already high: 22 tons an acre compared to around two tons for Peru and Bolivia. But boosting production will give potato farmers more export options, he said.

Says Mentaberry, "This is not going to be a dramatic change—maybe a greater export of potatoes to Brazil—but more importantly, it's the whole idea of making a social impact through genetic engineering. This could make a great difference to Peru and Bolivia, perhaps increasing their (production of) two tons an acre fivefold."

The idea of this research, he said, is not to change traditional agricultural practices. Instead, the goal is to create an economic impact that spurs—rather than imposes—development.

"The Green Revolution was supported by mechanization, by chemicals and by huge expenditures of energy. If

you are looking for increases in this kind of technology, you're going to create pollution. It is only logical to look for softer, friendlier technologies," observes Mentaberry.

A grave financial situation

In Mentaberry's opinion, Argentina's potential advantage lies in the fact that, because it has the incentive to pursue genetic engineering, it could surpass developed countries in the

development of pest- and virus-resistant crops. Other candidates for genetic engineering include cotton—which could be made more pest-resistant—and soy beans, which could be engineered for higher quality. Proposals have been submitted, said Mentaberry, but so far there are no concrete projects.

Although genetic engineering has

prompted protests around the world, with arguments over patent rights and ethical issues, the controversy has bypassed Argentina, says Palma. For the most part, the country has welcomed the potential prosperity genetic engineering could bring.

According to Palma, lack of public investment poses a far greater threat to the future of this research than does public opposition. Despite the potential benefits, the Argentine government commits less than \$4 million a year to genetic engineering research projects.

"Genetic engineering is very important, but we just don't have the resources. We're in a grave situation financially," says Palma. ☐

ALLIE JOHNSON IS A WRITER FOR THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER *The Buenos Aires Herald*.

BIO-PIRACY

Continued from page 1

ponents say have to be answered. What will be the impact on Indian agriculture if farmers are denied their traditional right to conserve and utilize seeds?

What will be the impact of more expensive seeds and food products in a country where 237 million people live below the officially-defined poverty line? Nearly 70 percent of the country's population depends on farming, yet most people are not even aware of the debate over an issue that could fundamentally change their lives.

According to the Canada-based Rural Advancement Fund International (RAFI), Third World countries will lose between US\$43 billion and \$102 billion annually if industrialized countries succeed in changing international trade regulations so that they are forced to pay royalties for patented products and technologies.

In the opinion of one researcher, P. Saineth, "Multi-national corporations (MNCs) are appropriating seeds that belong to Third World nations, making

some modifications, and then taking out patents on them. It does not matter if Indian peasants have put centuries of effort into creating and improving that variety—an MNC adding that final modification appropriates those centuries, while preventing us from making any

can afford to acquire and license patented technologies. This, says report, "means that a single corporation can set the terms and conditions for access."

Experts say that, currently, Indian farmers are not dependent on imported seeds. State universities and the Indian Council for Agricultural Research have done much work in this field, and made the fruits of their research available to farmers and agribusiness alike.

But, according to Saineth, TRIP will change all of this. "Bio-piracy," sanctioned by patents, will undermine India's food security, she predicts, since patented protected seed varieties are linked less to food needs than they are to the marketing and processing requirements of agribusiness.

Saineth foresees a widening of public sector research and processing of agribusiness.

search if widespread patenting of plants and seeds takes place. Says Saineth, "In effect, the whole system will ensure a continuous transfer of income from farmers to the MNCs, a subsidy of the rich by the poor." ☐

SHARMILA JOSHI IS A BOMBAY-BASED WRITER SPECIALIZING IN SOCIAL ISSUES.

Hijacking the Neem tree

ONE EXAMPLE CITED by critics of the WTO is the US patent granted to WR Grace and Company. The giant, New York-based agribusiness firm received a patent granting it a worldwide monopoly for a pesticide derived from the Neem tree—a species native to India.

Armed with this patent, WR Grace made plans to set up business units in India that would process 7,500 tons of Neem seeds annually. Demand for the seed increased: prices soon rose from 300 rupees a ton to 3,000 rupees a ton.

In September 1995, a coalition of 200 non-governmental organizations from over 40 countries filed a legal challenge to the patent. They dismissed WR Grace's assertion that their operations are providing employment and boosting the incomes of farmers who grow this seed.

—S. Joshi

evolution to our seed."

A recent RAFI report chronicles another disturbing trend: sweeping patent claims on important crops that are pending in many countries. Broad patents on biological materials and the processes used to manipulate them are "locking up" new plant technologies in the hands of a few corporations that

food for thought



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Supermarket to the world



FEBRUARY 1

Star

Pro

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PROGRAM

SATURDAY

The Bold and the Beautiful

The Bold and the Beautiful

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The Star's GUIDE

Programs on JTV from 3-8 March

ENGLISH PROGRAM

SATURDAY

2:00—Moomins
2:30—Wish Kid
3:00—Harry and the Hendersons
3:25—Blue Heelers
4:00—Okavango
5:00—French Programs
5:30—News Headlines
7:30—Major Dad
8:00—The Stamp of Greatness
8:25—The Bold and the Beautiful
9:10—The Glass Virgin
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Feature Film
11:50—Mancuso FBI

SUNDAY

2:00—The Flintstones
2:30—Disney's Aladdin
3:00—Family Playhouse
3:30—Blue Heelers
4:00—Okavango
5:00—French Programs
5:30—News Headlines
7:30—Keeping up Appearances
8:00—Oriental Rugs
8:35—The Bold and the Beautiful
9:25—Women of the World
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Counterstrike
11:15—The American Chart Show
12:00—Stay Lucky

MONDAY

2:00—Bonkers
2:30—Richie Rich
3:00—Playabout
3:15—Bustin Loose
3:40—Animals of the Mediterranean
4:10—Okavango
5:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines

7:35—McHale's Navy

8:00—Inventions
8:25—The Bold and the Beautiful
9:10—Russia: The Missing Years
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Perfect Scoundrels
11:10—Taurus Rising
12:00—Ellen

TUESDAY

2:00—Captain Planet
2:30—Johnny Quest
2:50—Iris: The Happy Professor
3:00—Spirit of Adventure
3:40—Scientific Eye
4:10—Okavango
5:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:55—You Bet Your Life
8:00—Oriental Rugs
8:25—The Bold and the Beautiful
9:10—Harry
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Three Sovereigns for Sarah
11:15—Feature Film

WEDNESDAY

2:00—The Flintstones
2:30—Speed Racer
3:00—Feature Film
4:00—Okavango
5:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:55—Evening Shade
8:00—Oriental Rugs
8:25—The Bold and the Beautiful
9:10—Horizon
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Airwolf



Adventures of the Old West, Thursday at 3:40

11:20—The Silk Road
12:30—Second Thoughts

THURSDAY

1:00—Fireman Sam
1:10—Disney's Aladdin
1:30—The Legends of Treasure Island
2:00—My Secret Identity
2:15—NBA
3:15—The new leave it to Beaver
3:40—Adventures of the Old West
4:30—Gillette World Sport
5:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:55—Keeping up Appearances
8:15—The Album Show
9:10—Pride and Prejudice
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Feature Film

12:00—Matlock

FRIDAY

1:00—The Little Mermaid
1:30—Iris: The Happy Professor
1:40—Lift Off
2:05—See How They Grow
2:15—Bush School
2:30—Wonder Why
3:00—Feature Film
4:30—Give Us a Clue
5:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:55—Short Story Cinema
8:00—Sea Quest
8:45—America's Funniest People
9:10—Widows
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Second Chances
11:45—Classic Movie

PROGRAMMES EN FRANÇAIS

SAMEDI

5:00—Documentaire
• La bionique
5:30—Série
Les compagnons de l'aventure
6:00—Série
Château Vallon
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine
Faut pas rêver
• USA, l'or rouge du nouveau monde

DIMANCHE

5:00—Documentaire
• L'arbre à fièvre
5:30—Série
Les compagnons de l'aventure
6:00—Magazine
Envoyé spécial
• Bonjour viellesse
• Alerte au pyralène
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine
Sports et musique

LUNDI

5:00—Dessins animés
Ordy
Cupido
5:30—Les compagnons de l'aventure
5:50—Magazine
C'est pas sorcier
6:20—Divertissement
L'école des fans
• Michèle Torre

Programs are subject to change by JTV

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Cinema

"DESPERADO" (Columbia/TriStar,) Both a remake of his acclaimed "El Mariachi" and also a sequel of sorts to it, director Robert Rodriguez' action-drama displays Antonio Banderas to good effect, as the actor charismatically portrays a guitar player who's on a mission of vengeance against those whose actions have brought him personal pain. Salma Hayek, Cheech Marin and Quentin Tarantino co-star. *** (R: AS, P, V)

"NATIONAL LAMPOON'S SENIOR TRIP" (New Line,) With the "National Lampoon" imprimatur included so prominently in the title, it shouldn't take much to project how a high-school outing to the nation's capital turns out in the case of this comedy. Matt Frewer ("Max Headroom") plays the advisor in charge of the excursion, which doesn't take long to escape his control; Tommy Chong also appears. ** (R: AS, P, V)

"HELD OVER: NINE MONTHS" (Fox,) A film that got unexpected promotion via the media blitz surrounding star Hugh Grant's off-screen activities at the time, this comedy—the actor's first purely American project—casts him as a child psychologist who becomes panicked when his girlfriend (Julianne Moore) announces that she's pregnant. Robin Williams is hilarious as a delivery-room doctor. *** (PG-13: AS, P)

"LORD OF ILLUSIONS" (MGM/UA,) Horror master Clive Barker ("Hellraiser") strikes again as writer and director of this supernatural tale, casting "Quantum Leap" alumnus Scott Bakula as a detective hired by a woman (Famke Janssen, the villainess in "GoldenEye") to watch over her magician husband (Kevin J. O'Connor). Of course, matters go haywire. ** (R and unrated versions: AS, P, V)

"ARCHIE: RETURN TO RIVERDALE" (New Horizons,) The long-popular comic-book gang comes to life in this 1990 TV-movie, made for NBC as a pilot for a series that didn't sell. There's a twist in this case, since the characters are in their 30s now, facing the issues of adult life. Christopher Rich has the title role and Sam Whipple plays Jughead, with Lauren Holly—now of "Picket Fences"—as Betty. ** (PG: P)

COMING SOON: "UNDER SIEGE 2: DARK TERRITORY" (Warner, Feb. 6): Steven Seagal returns as the cook with a Special Forces background; Eric Bogosian is the main villain. (R)

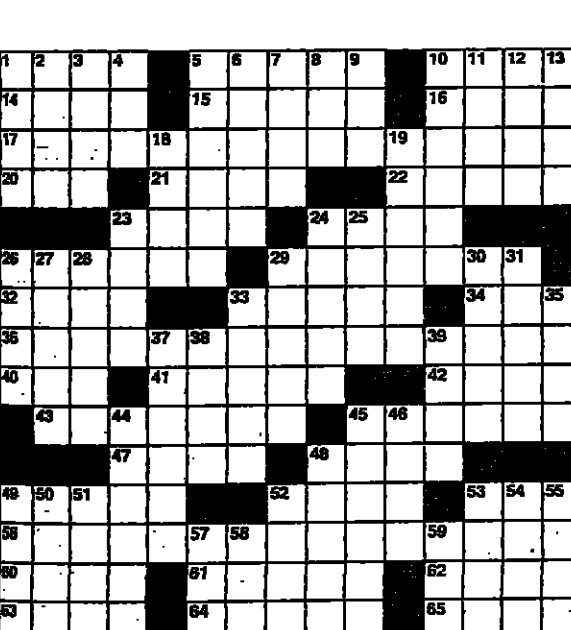
"THE USUAL SUSPECTS" (PolyGram, Feb. 6): The acclaimed crime drama casts Stephen Baldwin, Gabriel Byrne and Chazz Palminteri as heist accomplices. (R)

"DANGEROUS MINDS" (Hollywood, Feb. 13): Michelle Pfeiffer stars in the box-office hit about a Marine veteran who becomes a teacher of inner-city youths. (R)

FAMILY-VIEWING GUIDE KEY: AS, adult situations; N, nudity; P, profanity; V, violence; GV, particularly graphic violence.

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS
1 Otherwise
5 Attain
10 Qualified
14 Paper
15 Follow
16 Unheeding
17 On the —
20 Decade
21 Telegram
22 Small pests
23 Say it isn't so
24 Garden worker
28 Roughen by rubbing
29 Drain
32 Seethe
33 Menu
34 Wind
35 Direction
36 Emaciated
40 Snigger

DOWN
1 Formerly, formerly
2 Bounding gait
3 Daze
4 Corn unit
5 Purify
6 Foyer
7 Tennis great
8 Signal
9 Dress edge
10 Value highly
11 Borscht
12 Ingratiate
13 Country road
14 Nowts
15 Was in
16 Watery
17 Egg dish
18 Spanish artist
19 Tangle sheep
20 Tosses
21 French clergyman
22 French actor
23 Charles —
24 Firearm
25 "Divine Comedy" author
26 Before firma or cotta
27 Monetary penalty
28 Concerning
29 Restrain
30 "Francisco" hill
31 Expire
32 Male

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—THIS WEEK'S—
HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: The sun's still in Aquarius, excellent for scholarly pursuits.

Aries (March 21-April 19). You'll be sharp as the proverbial tack. Hopefully you'll learn enough to get you through.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). Troubles with finances could have you worried. Don't fret, a new opportunity could come along soon. You'll have no trouble with a tough job.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). The moon's in your sign. Mercury goes direct, lifting a barrier that's been in your way for the past few weeks. Apply for a loan.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). You may feel pressured. You may not have a moment for yourself. Do something relaxing so you'll be ready to take on the world.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). Meetings and team projects will go well. Your enthusiasm will be infectious. You may even get voted into a leadership position.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). An increase in your workload could make you nervous. Just take it one thing at a time.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You're one happy camper. Love, travel, and intellectual endeavors are all favored.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Hassles you encounter should clear soon, so keep after what you want. You should do well in discussions.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You're able to learn easily. An argument could be frustrating, but informative. Save your shopping until later. You'll be more adept with finances then.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). A job may have to be done over. A supportive remark could draw you to a new friend.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You should be in a good mood, but hassles with a bureaucrat could have you stumped. Give work your full attention.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). Finish a big assignment, whether you feel like it or not. If you're having trouble, ask a more experienced person to help.

If You're Having a Birthday This Week: You're lucky in love this year. Finish what you promised, so you can get on with your life.

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Bridge

By Tannah Hirsch

Both vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♠ 8 7
♥ K 8 4 2
♦ A
♣ A K Q J 9 5

WEST
♠ A K 4
♥ J 10 9 7 3
♦ Q 6
♣ 7 6 3

EAST
♠ 10 9 6 3 2
♥ Void
♦ J 10 8 4 3 2
♣ 8 4

SOUTH
♠ Q J 5
♥ A Q 6 5
♦ K 9 7 5
♣ 10 2

The bidding:
North East South West
1♠ Pass 1♥ Pass
3♥ Pass 4♥ Pass

Opening lead: King of ♠
When most declarers encounter a bad trump break, they head for the hills. On many occasions, however, the evil split can be overcome by careful play. Here's an example.

The North-South auction was straightforward, except that South chose to respond in the four-card major rather than the minor. North made an invitational jump raise and South, with a balanced hand and soft values, had no interest beyond game. West started off with three rounds of spades, declarer's queen winning

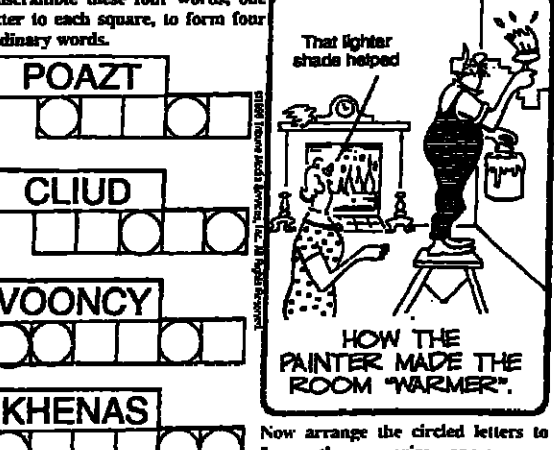
the last. The contract was cold as long as trumps were no worse than 4-1, but declarer received a shock when, on the ace of hearts, East discarded a spade. We know of some who would now simply concede down one, but South was made of sterner stuff. If West started with three clubs and two diamonds, the contract could still be brought home.

After clearing the ace of diamonds, declarer cashed the ace and king of clubs and ruffed a club. A club was discarded on the king of diamonds, leaving this position:

NORTH
S—
H-K 8 4
D—
C-J
WEST
S—
H-J 10 7
D—
C—
SOUTH
S—
H-Q 6
D-9 7
C—

Declarer led a diamond, forcing West to ruff high as dummy's club was discarded. Now West was forced to return a high trump, won in hand with the queen, and a finesse of dummy's trump eight allowed South to hold West to just one trump trick. Magic.

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Unscramble these four words, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.
POAZT
CLUD
VOONCY
KHENAS

Answers: WITH A ROOM WARMER, HOW THE PAINTER MADE THE ROOM 'WARMER', ANSWERS: HOW THE PAINTER MADE THE ROOM 'WARMER', ANSWERS: HOW THE PAINTER MADE THE ROOM 'WARMER'

The Star Tel. 652380
Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

Paloma Picasso's touch of fragrance

WHEN CREATING her first fragrance, Paloma Picasso wanted a product that was entirely in her own image, a firmly defined note produced from a perfume source of high pedigree, a Cyprus note.

The Cyprus note is founded on the amazing harmony formed from Patchouly and Oakmoss, heralded by fresh, floral and even citrus tones.

Using a modern expression, Picasso gave the key note thrilling, heady facets by way of woody and animal tones and a very feminine uplift built around a fruity rose. Taking the color red the to new extremes, Picasso decided that her fragrance would only exist in Eau de Parfum and Perfume forms, the most intensely dramatic versions where the sensuality of Cyprus is simply... irresistible.

Today the tone has the same distinctive color: red. The original note has remained intact: a Cyprus note where patchouly reigns supreme.

But the mood now is one of clarity. A shaft of light has pierced the fragrance of Picasso, setting the rose petals to music and blending it with flowers of lily of the valley.

This sheds greater light on the velvety accents of apricot and peach while leaving the headier woody and animal tones just slightly in the shade.

Picasso has created her Eau de Toilette: an authentic, close, friendly, luminous and lingering Cyprus note.

When Paloma Picasso created her fragrance in 1985, the keynote was that of passion and intensity inviting us to be women to the full, to the full essence of perfume. Developed also as an Eau de Parfum, her "chosen fragrance" spotlighted the finest materials, from May rose to jasmine, oakmoss to sandalwood, gray amber to patchouly.

Today her full perfume is turning to toilet water and assuming the tones of a water color. The note is lighter, the formula has been given a new look and perfuming is more generous.

A breeze of Cyprus freshness, water of distilled flowers and perfume of pressed fruit form the new delicious composition. The irresistible lightness of water, according to Paloma Picasso.

The citrus, animal, woody and spicy facets have been played down in order to bring out the cypress, floral and fruity aspect. The Eau de Toilette has been launched to meet the wants and needs of those loyal customers who have made Paloma's fragrance for their skin. It is an easier concentration for livelier use. A more attractive price to offer a new public the bliss of an essence with two facets: smouldering femininity and reassuring freshness.

The Paloma Picasso Eau de Toilette meets the need for intimate, private scents without the shortcomings of calm, flat toilet waters that leave no trail behind them.

Picasso admits to having added a little fire to her water, so as to be like her!

The perfume or essence contains a 20 to 40% concentrate (perfuming products) dissolved in very pure alcohol. ■

Charity Iftar at Inter.Con

UNDER THE patronage of HRH Princess Aya Al Faisal, Hotel InterContinental Jordan held their annual charity iftar for children. This year the children were chosen from two local charities, The King Hussein Social Society and The Social Society for Orphans.

The event comes as part of the worldwide 50th anniversary celebrations of both InterContinental Hotels & Resorts and Unicef. Mr. Frank Rattenstetter, Executive Assistant Manager at Hotel InterContinental Jordan says, "We are very proud to host such an occasion, especially that it coincided with our celebrations of our 50th anniversary, in which we are committed to help Unicef's 50th anniversary locally and worldwide."

The Unicef presented the children with special gifts to mark the occasion.

The Iftar was attended by HRH Princess Aya Al Faisal, Ms Dorrit Alopaeus Stohl, Unicef's area representative and Ms Nazik Bitar, Unicef's senior information officer. ■

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Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

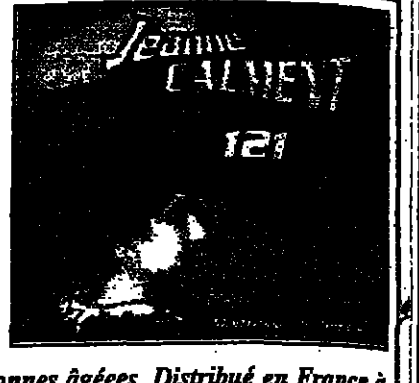
L'Irak passe au salon

«Non, je n'ai vraiment pas de temps cette semaine.» Telle a été la réponse du ministre français de l'Agriculture Philippe Vasseur qui apprenait en début de semaine la visite surprise à Paris du ministre irakien de l'Agriculture, Abdullah Mahmoud Saleh, qui souhaitait le rencontrer.

Un porte-parole français du ministre des affaires étrangères a déclaré qu'il n'était absolument pas au courant de cette visite. Selon l'agence de presse officielle irakienne INA, M. Saleh s'est rendu à titre privé à Paris pour découvrir le salon de l'agriculture, une manifestation rassemblant chaque année tous les professionnels du secteur agricole. M. Saleh aurait d'ailleurs déclaré, toujours selon INA, qu'il devait discuter avec des responsables français de la possibilité pour des entreprises françaises d'approvisionner l'Irak une fois l'embargo levé et de former des ingénieurs agricoles, ajoutant qu'il devait justement en parler avec Philippe Vasseur.

Si économiquement ces discussions intéressent la France pour qui l'Irak représentait un important débouché avant la guerre du Golfe, elles tombent bien mal diplomatiquement. Trois jours seulement après l'assassinat de Hussein Kamel et d'une partie de sa famille, la France peut en effet difficilement parler affaires avec l'Irak.

● A 121 ans, Jeanne Calment, la doyenne française, vient d'enregistrer son premier disque. Un CD de cinq titres sur lequel on perçoit sa voix, et dont les bénéfices iront à l'association Jeanne Calment qui s'occupe des personnes âgées. Distribué en France à 5000 exemplaires, ce disque vient s'ajouter à toute une série de gadgets, tels que des tee-shirts ou des pins à l'effigie de la vieille dame, devenue depuis trois ans une véritable star en France.



SELON

NO

Jacques Martin ne se doute certainement pas qu'il enseigne le français en Jordanie. Le célèbre présentateur de l'émission télévisée «Ecole des fans» fait un tabac dans le royaume, et ceci depuis quelques années déjà.

«L'Ecole des fans», une émission ayant ses détracteurs et ses inconditionnels, est basée sur une formule blindée: les enfants et la famille. Même si en cette fin de millénaire les structures traditionnelles en Europe ne sont plus tout à fait ce qu'elles étaient dans les années 50 ou 60, la formule reste valable. Au Moyen-Orient, où ces structures ont beaucoup moins changé qu'en Europe, elle se révèle d'une efficacité redoutable.

Diffusée dans le cadre du programme en français sur la deuxième chaîne jordanienne, «Ecole des fans» est d'abord destinée au public francophone du pays. Son impact débordant cependant largement ce cadre. Un grand nombre de nationaux, non ou très peu francophones, se passionnent pour l'admission plus que pour tout autre.

Si les sous-titres arabes y sont pour quelque chose, c'est surtout la simplicité de la langue employée et la répétition quasi systématique, frisant parfois le matraquage, des questions de Jacques Martin à ces adorables bambins qui passionnent ceux qui ne connaissent que quelques mots en français.

Apprès sur un banc d'école y a une génération ou deux, dans un guide touristique ou lors d'une visite en France, des rudiments de français suffisent à constituer une base de lancement pour faire progresser les connaissances de la plupart des amateurs, pour peu qu'ils soient motivés. «L'Ecole des fans» fait alors merveille.

Après avoir entendu M. Martin demander pour la millième fois à «ses enfants» s'ils sont venus en TGV, si leur maman leur fait des frites à midi, s'ils déjeunent plutôt à la cantine ou à la maison, ou s'ils trouvent la vedette de l'émission belle, on ne regarde plus les sous-titres. On retient la phrase en français.

Et tant pis si certains traits d'esprit un peu osés pour la mentalité locale ne sont pas traduits, soit parce que le sous-titreur n'en a pas compris le sens, soit parce qu'il ne désire pas en faire part aux téléspectateurs. Ils en feront leur deuil. Les adultes pourront toujours les découvrir au cours de leur prochain voyage en France.

Même les Jordaniens possédant une solide connaissance du français ne boudent pas complètement l'émission. Elle les fait simplement sourire.

Méthode audio-visuelle de choc pour un pays dont la première langue étrangère est l'anglais. «L'Ecole des fans» de Jacques Martin est tout simplement devenue une machine à enseigner le français, à un niveau que l'on pourrait qualifier de primaire.

Si le vocabulaire reste limité, il n'en est pas moins appris et bien retenu. Les Jordaniens motivés peuvent ensuite poursuivre les «cours» de Jacques Martin avec ceux du Centre culturel. Et dans ce contexte assez particulier, «l'Ecole des fans» est devenue une école tout court.

Jean-Claude Elias

Médias

Les journalistes divisés

Enterrée depuis plusieurs années, la réforme de la loi du syndicat des journalistes revient à l'ordre du jour, provoquant la grogne des journalistes.

Il y a peu d'espoir que la loi du syndicat des journalistes jordaniens soit modifiée dans l'intérêt de la profession.

Lors d'une réunion entre les journalistes et le comité judiciaire de la chambre basse des députés qui a eu lieu cette semaine, les différentes parties ont pu échanger leurs opinions. Et la différence de points de vue entre les journalistes et les députés, ainsi qu'entre les journalistes eux-mêmes, n'augure pas de la réalisation de changements radicaux.

Tout d'abord, il existe une certaine confusion à propos du projet de loi lui-même. La loi du syndicat date de 1983. Le syndicat des journalistes a proposé des modifications en 1989 et les a présentées à la chambre basse en 1990. La semaine dernière, le comité judiciaire a décidé d'entamer les discussions sur la loi et les modifications proposées, soit avec six ans de retard.

Le président du syndicat des journalistes, Souleiman Koudah estime que les modifications de 1989 sont à présent obsolètes, et que la loi nécessite une révision complète. Mais selon lui, le président du comité judiciaire, Abdoul Raouf Rawabdeh, a refusé d'avancer les discussions, et s'oppose à tout nouveau délai laissant au syndicat des journalistes le temps de déposer un nouveau projet.

A cette confusion sur les dates s'ajoute une querelle au sein des journalistes. Le conseil du syndicat a préparé de nouvelles modifications sur les modifications introduites en 1989 qui ne sont pas très appréciées par la profession. Elles provoquent en effet la colère de certains journalistes et rédacteurs en chef.

concerne l'obligation d'adhérer au syndicat des journalistes. Un principe que beaucoup de journalistes souhaiteraient voir disparaître.

Toujan Fayal, député connu pour ses revendications pour les droits de l'homme, est l'un des membres du comité judiciaire. Pour elle, lutter contre cet amendement est loin d'être évident, l'adhésion à un syndicat professionnel étant obligatoire en Jordanie.

Les conditions d'adhésion provoquent le mécontentement car elles éliminent beaucoup de journalistes. Pour devenir membre du syndicat, le journaliste doit être diplômé et doit avoir suivi entre une et trois années de formation. Il doit, en plus, être employé à plein temps. Deux conditions difficiles à satisfaire pour beaucoup de journalistes, souvent non-diplômés, qui sont obligés de chercher un deuxième emploi pour subvenir à leurs moyens.

Trois points de friction
Le premier point de friction



Pour Souleiman Koudah, président du syndicat des journalistes, les modifications déposées en 1990 sont aujourd'hui obsolètes.

Les discussions portent aussi sur l'adhésion des propriétaires des publications au syndicat. Des journalistes estiment en effet qu'un grand nombre d'entre eux ne peuvent être qualifiés de journalistes car ils sont des entrepreneurs, et ils ne doivent donc pas bénéficier du statut de membre du syndicat.

Pour les journalistes non syndiqués ou syndiqués, il est très difficile de se faire entendre des parlementaires. Et malgré leur insistance, ils n'arrivent pas à faire reculer la date des discussions de cette loi pour avoir le temps de présenter un nouveau projet, inspiré du statut réel des journalistes, de leurs aspirations, de leurs droits, et de leurs devoirs.

Sa'eda Kilani

Amman

Les cafés traditionnels boivent la tasse

Ces dernières années, Amman a vu disparaître plusieurs de ses cafés traditionnels en basse-ville. Des lieux qui portent en eux l'histoire de la ville et les traditions du pays.

La naissance des cafés est essentiellement liée à la naissance des cités. Ils sont par conséquent apparus avec la disparition de certaines coutumes, et la disparition du lieu tribal de l'accueil (le madhafa ou le diwan du chef de clan).

En ville, on échange souvent d'habitude pour élargir son univers. En ville, tout le monde se mélange, à l'inverse de la campagne, où l'on est tassé les uns contre les autres, en appartenant aux mêmes familles, aux mêmes clans.

Les cafés des villes arabes ont transporté avec eux toute la tradition orale du désert. C'est pour cela que la première tentative de théâtre a eu lieu dans l'enceinte d'un café.

Avec la modernité et la laïcité, les premiers partis politiques ont été créés dans les cafés. C'est là qu'ont eu lieu les premiers meetings. Certains sont même ressortis blessés, à coup de tabac. Et à la sortie, la police les attendait.

Avec le progrès, les cafés sont devenus une nécessité et se sont vus attribuer une fonction sociale.

Mais la modernité et le progrès n'ont pas que du bon. Les centres-villes deviennent de plus en plus étroits, le trafic automobile devient dense.

Des éléments qui entraînent la disparition des cafés traditionnels.

Les sociétés traditionnelles n'ont pas connu le phénomène des salons littéraires, ou très

rarement. Les cafés ont pris depuis deux siècles la place de ces salons inventés par les Européens, avec une seule petite différence due à la mentalité et à la spécificité de notre société: les femmes en étaient exclues.

Ce haut lieu de rencontres culturelles permettait aux intellectuels de tous bords d'organiser une vie littéraire où la culture coulait à flot dans les tuyaux des narguilés, et où la fumée qui s'en échappait emportait, en montant vers le ciel, les rêves des poètes, les aspirations des politiques, ou cauchemardesques, des marchands de foi et de promesses.

Ils étaient aussi traversés par un microcosme représentant une micro-société, où se mélangeaient les marchands ambulants de produits de contrebande, les trafiquants de toutes sortes de marchandises, les voyous et les petites frappes qui connaissent toute société.

Ahmad Nour



On ne trouve plus désormais beaucoup de cafés traditionnels en basse-ville. «Hashem» étant l'un des rescapés.

Jordanie

L'école tourne une page

La première phase de la réforme du système éducatif vient de s'achever avec le remplacement de tous les livres scolaires. Des programmes nouveaux qui ne satisfont pas tous les professeurs.

Encore quatre ans avant l'an 2000. Une année à laquelle tout le monde se prépare en essayant d'aborder le prochain millénaire avec les outils les plus modernes possibles. L'éducation joue un rôle majeur dans cette préparation à une époque nouvelle.

«Le ministère de l'Éducation forme des citoyens pour la vie moderne», explique Dr Mohammad Atiyah, directeur du département du développement de l'éducation. «La modernisation des livres et de l'enseignement scolaire étaient donc nécessaires.»

En 1987, une conférence nationale sur le développement de l'éducation a eu lieu en Jordanie à l'initiative du roi qui souhaitait réformer l'éducation en Jordanie.

Cette réflexion tournaient autour de trois points essentiels: l'élève, l'enseignement et la gestion administrative de l'éducation. «Nous avons commencé la réforme en 1989», explique Mohammad Atiyah. «Mais pour des raisons budgétaires, le plan a été divisé en deux phases de cinq ans, la première venant de se terminer.»

Celle-ci a coûté 180 millions de dollars (900 millions de francs). Elle est née d'une réflexion entre les institutions privées et les organismes publics chargés de l'éducation.

«Nous avons formé un département des programmes scolaires un groupe national réunissant des experts et des professeurs pour élaborer de nouveaux programmes», explique Talal al Zoubi, directeur du département des programmes scolaires.

Mieux préparer les jeunes

Les 276 différents livres et manuels scolaires qu'utilisent élèves et professeurs pendant les dix années d'école obligatoire - de 6 à 16 ans environ - ont été entièrement revus. Il faut dire que certains avaient une trentaine d'années.

«Le thème de l'unité nationale en Jordanie a beaucoup

inspiré les modifications, ainsi que des sujets modernes comme les droits de l'homme, l'environnement ou le rôle de la femme dans la société», ajoute Talal al Zoubi.

Ces nouveaux programmes ne semblent pas cependant donner entière satisfaction aux enseignants. «Les matières qu'on enseigne maintenant s'intéressent à des sujets qui sont loin de la réalité de l'élève», tempête Bahar al Aloul, professeur de sciences.

«Ils sont plats, pas vivants et ne permettent pas de développer les capacités créatives de l'élève». Pour elle, la réforme doit être complète. Elle doit notamment revoir la formation des enseignants et repenser les méthodes d'enseignement, comme par exemple le nombre d'élèves par classe.

Pour Nahil Habash, institutrice, «bien que les matières soient très intéressantes, il n'est pas très facile d'adapter les enfants à ce changement brusque».

«Les livres contiennent beaucoup trop de choses pour un semestre normal. Les élèves n'ont pas le temps nécessaire pour réfléchir et assimiler toutes ces connaissances», raconte Nahil Habash une enseignante d'arabe. «Pour renforcer le sentiment national, on a remplacé des poésies glorifiant l'histoire arabe, comme celles de Mahmoud Darwish, par des textes d'auteurs jordaniens ou



Désormais, les élèves des écoles jordaniennes peuvent compter sur des manuels scolaires neufs pour étudier.

parlant de la Jordanie. Ce n'est pas forcément un mieux.

Cette réforme des livres, autant sur la forme que sur le fond, exige donc une adaptation des professeurs, qui sont

désormais chargés d'enseigner avec des outils plus modernes pour mieux préparer les jeunes à leur époque.

Oroub El Abed

Découverte

La France à quelques minutes d'Amman

Vous souhaitez visiter le Louvre sans bouger d'Amman? Rien de plus simple. Grâce aux Cd-Roms du Centre culturel français, vous pouvez désormais découvrir la France d'une autre façon.

Beaucoup de gens fréquentent le Centre culturel français à Amman pour y prendre des cours de langue française. Mais le Centre ne se limite pas à cette activité. Il offre au sein de son centre de ressources toutes les informations disponibles sur la France dans tous les domaines possibles: la culture, les langues, les études en France, l'économie, les sciences.

Le but de ce centre de ressources est de rassembler toutes ces informations à un niveau global. Il s'agit en effet de procurer aux personnes intéressées des données assez générales, les différents services de l'ambassade de France pouvant eux répondre à des demandes plus précises.

Le centre de ressources dispose de trois supports pour diffuser ces informations: le papier, bien sûr, avec les nombreux ouvrages qui composent la bibliothèque du Centre culturel, les cassettes audio et vidéo, avec notamment des documentaires, et désormais l'informatique, avec trois ordinateurs équipés de lecteur de CD-ROM.

Les CD-Rom sont des disques pouvant offrir à la fois des informations sonores et visuelles. Légèrement plus gros qu'un disque laser, ils permettent, par exemple, de réunir sur le même support la visite d'une exposition de peinture, en montrant ses différents tableaux, et les commentaires sonores et écrits d'un guide.

Les CD-Rom disponibles

au Centre, environ une vingtaine, présentent plusieurs aspects de la France, à travers sa culture ou son histoire. Il sera notamment possible de visiter Paris et de découvrir ses monuments. En quelques minutes seulement, vous pourrez vous retrouver au milieu du musée du Louvre, admirant la Joconde ou bien devant les toiles d'Eugène Delacroix. Et si l'histoire vous attire, vous pourrez vous plonger dans la Révolution française ou la vie de Napoléon. Des logiciels que l'on peut consulter dans quatre langues: en français, anglais, allemand ou espagnol.

L'utilisation d'un ordinateur pour consulter ces CD-Rom ne pose aucun problème à ceux qui ne connaissent pas

l'informatique. On se familiarise très rapidement avec les CD-Rom. De plus, ce support offre une plus grande liberté que, par exemple, une cassette vidéo. Contrairement à un film qui défile et que l'on doit suivre, le CD-Rom permet à celui qui le consulte de choisir ce qu'il veut voir, de sélectionner certaines données qui l'intéressent.

Le centre de ressources s'adresse à tous ceux qui veulent découvrir la France et qui n'ont pas la possibilité de s'y rendre. Une ballade qui leur est offerte, la consultation étant gratuite et ouverte à tous.

Abir Al-Harbout
Centre culturel français
Tel: 637 009/636 445

C'est la vie

L'agenda français d'Amman

Début du cycle François Truffaut (8 films et 2 vidéos) au Centre culturel français et à la fondation Shoman:

Cinéma

«Le dernier métro» le 4/03 à 20h00 au CCF.

«Les 400 coups» le 05/03 à 18h30 à la fondation Shoman.

Vidéo

«François Truffaut ou l'esprit critique» le 06/03 à 18h00 au CCF.

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THE STAR'S

COMPUTING & HIGH TECH

Edited by Zeid Nasser

Sakhr & Acer Redefine the Arabic home PC

TWO OF the biggest information technology companies working in the Middle East have announced the first strategic alliance of its kind in the Arab World.

Sakhr Software, the leading Arabic software publisher, and Acer Middle East, the region's top PC supplier, announced that they would unite their efforts to produce and market the ideal "Arabic Home PC", by packaging Sakhr's Arabic educational, entertainment, religious and business software with Acer PC systems sold in the different countries of the region.

This alliance, the first in the region's IBM PC & Compatibles industry, reaffirms the rising importance of the home PC market, on the one hand, and growth in the Arabic software industry in general, and software applications for the home user, in particular.

The agreement will enable Acer to greatly broaden its user-base of customers, penetrating different markets in the region and developing its presence in these markets. By providing suitable Arabic software, along with its PC systems, Acer will better fulfill the factors which influence purchasing decisions of Arab users in the home, school, small and medium size businesses.

Both companies have much to benefit from this agreement, utilizing the marketing and advertising activities of Acer and Sakhr to promote one another's products. Also, each will provide better exposure of the others products to its own customers.

It is expected that the fruitful benefits of this agreement between Acer and Sakhr Software will encourage other

hardware companies, working in the Middle East, to forge such alliances with Arabic software publishers.

Throughout last year, Sakhr widely expanded the number of educational and entertainment software it developed. In fact, Sakhr's products virtually dominate these important sectors in

can run in Arabic language under the English-language version of Windows 95.

The programs available on the compact disks represent Sakhr's varied and comprehensive lines of software. The first compact disk includes religious education programs such as *Ta'lam Al Salat* (Learning Prayer), *Al Tareekh Al Islami* (Islamic History), *Kunooz Islamiya* (Islamic Treasures), and the Arabized package *Alman Ouzi* (Ouzi's World).

Another compact disc includes classic tales, published for the first time in electronic form, such as *Kalila & Dimna*. Both compact disks run under Sakhr Arabic Windows 3.x environments and the English-language version of Windows 95.

The third compact disc includes a huge collection of educational, entertainment and productivity software, covering the different needs of home users and small businesses. These include *Al Maktab Al Shakhshi* (Personal Office), which is the Arabized version of Claris Works. Also, there's *Ikhtabar Ma'lumatik* (Test your Knowledge), *Ikhtabar Thakalak* (Test your Intelligence), the *Kid Pack* group of programs, *Mudareb Al Teba'ah* (Typing Trainer), *Al Qamous* (The Dictionary) and *Al Aab Al Qamous* (Dictionary Games), *Al Amthal* (Sayings), in addition to a host of English-language games. This compact disc only works under Sakhr Arabic Windows 3.x.

Acer will package these three compact disks with every Arabic Home PC it produces, also retaining the rights to selectively package some of these compact disks with other lines of PCs that Acer produces. This

the Arabic software market. The agreement with Acer is a testimony to this fact.

Sakhr's supremacy in the Arabic educational and entertainment software market brings to mind its leading role since its beginnings with the Sakhr MSX computer system. Most analysts and computer industry professionals in the Middle East believe that Sakhr owes its success to different products that strongly resemble Sakhr's understanding of Arab civilization and culture.

The agreement covers three compact disks which include a large number of carefully chosen programs, that suit the targeted audience of different users and which provides excellent added value to buyers of Acer PCs. The focus has been to provide Arabic software that would appeal to many users. In fact, two of the compact disks



will ensure the spread of Sakhr's software among different users in the home, school or work place.

A successful annual computer event in Jordan is concluded: American products shine in Amman

THE FOURTH annual American Computer Show came to a close on Friday 18 February, 1996, after three days of sheer activity and bustling visitors.

The event, organized by the American Embassy in Amman, and co-sponsored by a number of local companies witnessed much participation from local computer companies. As a matter of fact, the number of participating companies was in the twenty's (also counting the sponsors).

Leading Jordanian suppliers of American products were showing off their best and latest products, whether in hardware or software.

At the entrance, one has to stop to consider that this is the first time a computer show in Jordan is held in such a organized show hall. Spread out to the left and right from the entrance, companies incorporated sparkling banners and slogans to attract visitors.

Sprint Jordan was displaying live demonstrations of Internet connectivity to a very curious audience, who were surprisingly well-informed about the Internet, considering that there still isn't a full Internet access service in the country. Navigating the World Wide Web on a massive screen, with specially placed chairs in front of it, Sprint's stand looked like 'Internet School', and an attractive one at that.

Still on the subject of on-line services, both NETS and Access were present at the

show, promoting their BBS show, promising of providing powerful gateway's to their users onto the Internet, when it became available.

NETS and Access have witnessed much growth in user numbers over the last few months and are looking forward to even better response to their services soon.

Getting back to hardware vendors, the show included all the major American brands, represented by their Jordanian dealers.

Ideal Group was present at the show, introducing its new line of Compaq Presario, Apple Macintosh and Silicon Graphics computers.

At the Mirage Information Systems Group (MIG) stand, a range of ALR computer products was on display, showcasing a number of applications including business and multimedia.

Special Systems Co. (SSC) presented its range of IBM PC products, the IBM Aptiva for home users and the new IBM PC 300 and 700 series to business users. Also, at the SSC stand were Lexmark printers and some NCR (AT&T Global) computer products.

The highlight of the SSC stand was the demonstrated installation of a structured cabling system from AT&T, known as *Systemax*.

Sinam Integrated Systems was focusing on its advanced bar-coding systems, working in conjunction with CyberStar personal computers. Also on

show were a number of American supplies offered by Sinam, such as modems and other peripherals.

Omega's popular mass storage products were being displayed at Abdul Majid Marakah Co.'s stand, where the company also presented its latest huge, color graphics printers, from Encad, aimed at designers and engineers.

Arabian Office Automation displayed its Everex PC systems at its stand, highlighting the full solutions the company offered in telecommunications utilizing Black Box communications equipment.

Specialized Technical Services (STS) presented their lines of AST computers and Sun workstations. Also at the STS stand were a variety of Microsoft software products for entertainment, education and business.

Which brings us to the software side of the show, with the most popular American software packages being displayed. At the Computer Applications & Technical Systems (CATS) stand, the company was showing its range of Computer Associates software and Ingres database software.

All in all, the American Computer Show was a successful event, in terms of the impressive numbers of visitors who attended, and due to the general satisfaction expressed by managers of participating computer companies.

Ad Dustour goes on the Internet

THIS MONTH the Jordanian daily *Ad Dustour*, became the first Arabic newspaper in Jordan available on the Internet.

Following the signing of an agreement with Arabia On-Line, an Internet service provider that specializes in Internet publishing, fans of *Ad Dustour* can check out their favourite paper at Arabia On-Line's site on the World Wide Web.

This move comes at a time when leading national and regional newspapers are introducing electronic versions, aimed at reaching millions of potential readers on the Internet.

Apart from targeting a new audience, *Ad Dustour* On-Line should also provide unique opportunities of advertising exposure for clients interested in getting their message across

to an international audience, that could not be reached in print form.

Also, this is good news for Jordanians abroad, as it will enable them to follow local news from any country in the world. To see what the electronic version of *Ad Dustour* looks like, log into the following address: <http://arabia.com> on the World Wide Web.

PC. On the other hand, Sakhr has committed to assisting Acer in the Arabization of its user-interface. Explorer Home, which is quite similar to Sakhr's own 'Murshid' user-interface. Acer will cover the costs of this technical assistance.

Acer Middle East is timing the launch of its Arabic Home PC to coincide with the Holy month of Ramadan.

Sakhr is known to be the largest Arabic software company, leading the way in the development and production of Arabic software for the family and educational sector. Sakhr has a long history behind it in

educational computing, starting ever since the days the company introduced the culture of personal computing to tens of thousands of Arab users with its Sakhr MSX computer, which was sold to users spanning Arab countries from the Middle East to North Africa and beyond.

The recent agreement with Acer further Sakhr's commitment to spreading this culture, and making sure the message of Sakhr's software gets into every Arab home.

For more information, contact Sakhr Computer Software in Cairo at telephone 202 2749929.

INTERFACE

BY ZEID NASSER

On-line newspapers & magazines: Like the real thing?

AMIDST THE Internet revolution, a new argument is arising regarding the challenge that on-line information poses to print media. Will on-line media replace the paper versions of publications and can we expect people to prefer to read on-line newspapers or magazines on a computer screen, instead of actually buying them from a shop?

An interesting report that appeared at the beginning of this year showed that people do tend to seek their information on-line, when unable to leave their homes or offices. During one of the biggest snow storms to hit the United States in January, the on-line edition of the *New York Times* recorded that tens of thousands of readers logged on to read their favorite newspaper. As these people couldn't leave their homes to go and buy their morning newspaper, they sought the other alternative, reading the news on their computer screens.

Till today, it remains an alternative, if the printed option is not available. The question is whether readers prefer on-line publications to printed ones.

First, there still remains a bit of a technical barrier. On-line newspapers and magazines don't look exactly like their printed counterparts. The availability of graphics and photography is sometimes limited in on-line publications. Compared to a magazine that includes full photography and graphic images, text-based versions on the Internet may not be so appealing. To the best of my knowledge, these limitations still do exist. It takes time to download pictures off the Internet. I personally noticed how much time it took to download the colorful cover of a popular magazine. But, of course, that will change, given the advancements in communications systems and the ability of new communication networks to carry more data (text, graphics or otherwise) at a relatively fast rate. The result will be more graphics and faster access. That should bring newspapers and magazines to life on your computer screen. Popular Arabic newspapers and magazines are just starting to go on-line. The results so far have been phenomenal in terms of recorded increase in readership. An example we have felt our selves is *The Star* On-Line.

Since *The Star* became available on the Internet, through a service called Arabia On-Line, there has been an average weekly readership of no less than 8,000 people, who logged into *The Star*'s site of the World Wide Web.

The flood of e-mail we received, comments and opinions, opened up a whole new audience of readers we could have never reached in print form. People from all over the world were able to read *The Star*, and follow Jordanian news from the comfort of their computer desks in any continent.

This concept was like a dream-come-true for us writers and editors at *The Star*. We felt honored to know that thousands of new people were reading our newspaper.

This takes us back to the main question. Will on-line media replace print media, or even kill it, soon?

My personal belief is that print media will never die. There's nothing like actually holding a magazine, going through its pages, enjoying the photography and the feel of it. Besides, if you don't have a mobile computer with a modem, it's always easier to carry your copy of a newspaper or magazine in your bag or pocket.

To be realistic, how many people actually have access to the Internet everyday, or even have a computer to start with. No, my vote still goes to print as the medium to reach the masses. Of course, TV and radio also reach the masses; but, we're discussing the effect of on-line media on the printed word. You may be wondering what publishers will have to lose, if sales of their printed newspapers and magazines fall. How will they. One way is to ask for a minimal charge from users who want to read their publication on-line.

On-line readers could pay this charge by entering their credit card numbers, or may later be billed for the sum required. The means and effectiveness of payment on the Internet is a whole argument in its own right, which is going to take some time to be resolved.

In the meantime, we in Jordan, still await full Internet access to truly understand this whole issue of on-line media versus print. For now, I hope you enjoy the printed paper versions of publications. In the future, your issues of *The Star* may be stored on your hard disk, instead of being filed on your shelf. It may happen sooner than you think.

UN report

Drug trafficking must be fought

VIENNA (UN) — "Enormous difficulties" faced by a number of countries in combating illicit drug abuse and trafficking are the subject of the 1995 Report of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), which was released here today Thursday.

Among the problems highlighted are weaknesses in anti-money-laundering laws, cultivation of cannabis, cocaine abuse, drug-related violence in previously less affected Caribbean countries.

Other trends include unregulated flow of chemicals for the making of cocaine and heroin; significant reductions of poppy cultivation in Vietnam; diversion of cough mixtures containing codeine to the black market; and the spread of heroin in parts of Asia. The Board welcomes the establishment of subregional drug control efforts in South-East Asia, Central Asia and Central Europe.

The report also sights how global economic integration, opening borders and deregulation of trade are facilitating international trafficking: coca is said to be smuggled out of South America for processing in Lebanon and subsequent export, via Turkey, to countries in Europe; the United Arab Emirates was used to divert methamphetamine precursors to Mexico for illicit export to the United States; South-East Asian heroin is smuggled by unexpected routes, such

as by sea through Vladivostok and by land through Mongolia, with the countries of the Caucasus increasingly being used as transit points for bringing the drug into Western Europe; and cannabis resin originating in Pakistan has made its way to Canada through ports in Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa and Uganda.

In its report, the Board evaluates the progress made by governments in carrying out their commitments, under the recent international drug control treaty, to curtail money laundering activities as a way to deter drug trafficking.

It concludes that although financial operations are the points where criminals are the most vulnerable, and money trails are often the only way to trace the organizers of an illicit drug operation, many countries are still in need of appropriate laws and procedures to prevent the laundering of criminal proceeds. The report acknowledges that strong countermeasures recently enacted by Switzerland, Luxembourg, Monaco and the Cayman Islands have made those traditional "safe havens" begin to lose their attractiveness for launderers. At the same time, it expresses regret that there is no worldwide concerted action against money laundering nor any reporting system on the seizure and confiscation of drug trafficking proceeds.

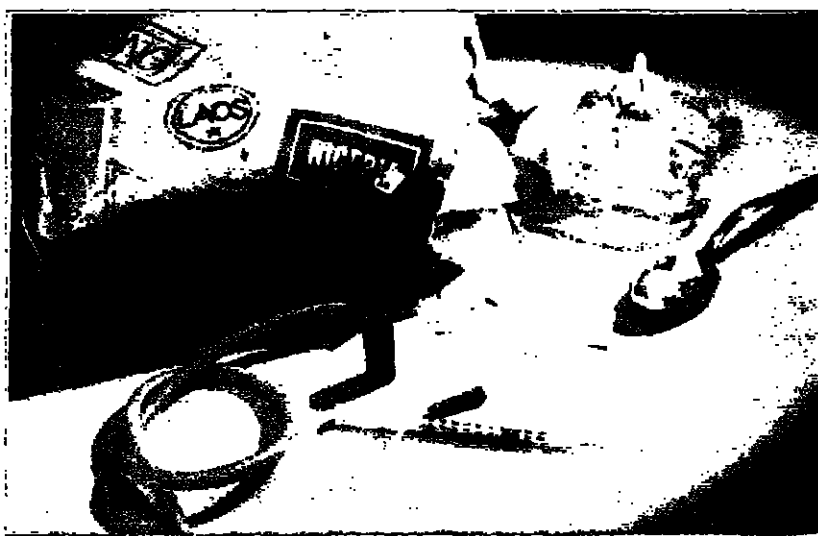
Since its last report, the Board sent investigative missions to: Benin, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Cambodia, Ghana, Guatemala, Iran, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Switzerland, Togo, Ukraine and UAE.

In its analysis of the drug situation for 1995 the INCB points to the following:

■ Nigeria's National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, by arresting eight key traffickers and investigating their finances, made its first move against major organizers of drug trafficking;

■ Heroin originating in Asia, in addition to being frequently shipped to Europe and North America through African seaports and airports, has become available at low prices in many West African cities;

■ Cocaine, couried to Europe via African ports, is spreading to lower social classes in West Africa, due to low prices, and crack has been reported in Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa;



■ The smuggling of methamphetamine out of Bombay into eastern and southern Africa appears to be more profitable than heroin smuggling;

■ Small coca bush cultivation sites have been detected in southern Panama and cocaine abuse is up in several countries in the region;

■ Although large quantities of opium from Asia and Europe are channelled through Guatemala to Mexico and the United States for illicit manufacture of methamphetamine, no seizure of any precursor has so far been reported in Central America;

■ In North America indoor cannabis cultivation permits year-round production in the United States, on a scale of anything from a few plants in a closet to thousands of plants in clandestine greenhouses;

■ The Board has received reports from the United States of widespread abuse of "blunts" — cigars in which tobacco is replaced by cannabis;

■ Cocaine use is on the decline in Canada, but has increased in Mexico and, in 1994, also in the United States where the number of drug abusers has been declining since 1985;

■ The Board is urging the US to pay special attention to the detection of clandestine LSD laboratories—major suppliers of the global market;

■ The Board is reminding South American countries that the sale of pharmaceutical preparations containing psychotropic substances without medical prescription—or through non-rational prescribing practices—is not in line with the provisions of the 1971 Convention;

■ Colombia has eradicated illicit coca and opium poppy plantations, seizing clandestine laboratories and moving against powerful drug gangs;

■ Brazil, which until recently has not been controlling adequately the manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, has drawn up new legislation intended as a sound basis for the fight against illicit drugs, but the Board still considers that country's anti-money-laundering laws to be too weak;

■ In East and South-East Asia, the Board notes the increased attention being paid by Governments in the region to treatment programs and demand reduction efforts, including the compulsory treatment and rehabilitation programs for addicts in China, Singapore and Vietnam;

■ Although it grows wild and is extensively cultivated in Asia, cannabis of Nigerian origin is frequently seized in Hong Kong and Japan;

■ While opium smoking has fallen off in the region, in Ho Chi Minh City and in other urban centers in Vietnam, injecting "blackwater" opium—raw morphine

extracted from opium smoking residue—is becoming a problem and heroin addiction is spreading;

■ The Board notes with concern the absence in Singapore of control measures for international trade in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors in its free ports and zones and requests that government to adopt suitable control measures as soon as possible;

■ Nepal has banned the sale of phensedyl and other codeine-based cough syrup in an effort to combat the abuse of those substances which is on the rise throughout the region;

■ The weakness of pharmaceutical marketing export controls in India have resulted in an alarming increase in abuse of buprenorphine, an injectable synthetic opioid in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and the Commonwealth of Independent States contributing to the spread of HIV infection.

■ Concerning Western Asia, the Board stresses the need to create and strengthen appropriate legislation and law enforcement structures in the States of the former Soviet Union, where cultivation, manufacture, traffic and abuse of illicit drugs are on the increase;

■ In view of the large areas of Central Asian members of the Commonwealth of Independent States that are covered by wild-growing cannabis, the Board recommends that the countries concerned clarify the tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) content of the wild and cultivated varieties in the region;

■ Former cannabis and poppy growers in the Beqaa valley in Lebanon—where illicit crops appear to have been eradicated—have no alternative source of income, a situation which has given rise to strong tension.

■ Law enforcement authorities in Georgia reported the detection of experimental coca bush plantations, where traffickers have been exploring the possibility of large-scale cultivation.

■ Abuse of amphetamine and fenetyline has been reported in Israel, Lebanon and some of the Gulf States, although some seized "fenetyline" samples have turned out not to contain fenetyline, but only caffeine;

■ The Board has expressed concern that successful law enforcement action in Pakistan is often not followed by the punishment of drug traffickers and has

invited the Government to combat such factors as corruption and the political influence of criminals;

■ With regard to Europe, the Board expresses regrets that despite the growing concern over drug-related problems, no comprehensive drug legislation has been enacted in any of the formerly socialist countries of Eastern Europe, a step which it strongly recommends;

■ The Netherlands is reported to be seeking to bring its drug policy more in line with the international drug control conventions, but the Board objects to practices that it says call into question the country's fidelity to its treaty obligations.

■ The impact of organized crime on country's political, economic and social stability has been strongest in the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, where the interdiction capability of law enforcement services is limited, the justice system is slow, corruption hinders the functioning of administrations and democratic institutions remain fragile;

■ Despite a ban on all poppy cultivation, illicit opium poppy growing is continuing in Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, and in Moldova it is not yet regulated;

■ The clandestine manufacture of the synthetic opioid 3-methylfentanyl—a substance several hundred times more potent than heroin—constitutes a threat to entire Europe;

■ South American drug cartels are smuggling cocaine into Europe through Poland, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and several countries in south-eastern Europe;

■ The smuggling into Europe of large quantities of khat, a botanical drug which is widely abused in North Africa and the Gulf region, is creating problems for authorities of several countries;

■ Switzerland has reportedly assured the Board that it is taking all necessary steps to ratify and implement the 1971 Convention some time this year, including the application of an export-import authorization system designed to curb illicit trade in psychotropic substances.

On the question of money laundering, the report states the Board's view that "no Governments and no society should accept, from a moral and ethical point of view, that income could be derived from criminal activities such as drug trafficking and related activities." It recommends that besides their legal obligations under the 1988 treaty, all countries should accept the obligation to provide and enforce laws which enable them to confiscate all proceeds derived from drug trafficking and punish money launderers as well as drug traffickers.



Drug plantations remain a major problem in the world